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STARBURST™



SPECIAL TV ISSUE

STAR TREK

TRIPODS

DOCTOR WHO

● **DOOMWATCH**

OUTER LIMITS

ADAM ADAMANT



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• CONTENTS •

STARBURST LETTERS	4	INTERVIEW: DIRECTOR ALEX COX	
THINGS TO COME	6	ON REPO MAN	35
DR SALLY GARY ON STAR TREK	11	STARBURST FILM REVIEWS	38
THE OUTER LIMITS	16	VIDEO FILE	40
RETROSPECTIVE: DOOMWATCH	20	IT'S ONLY A MOVIE	42
DOCTOR WHO'S NEW SEASON	24	TV ZONE	43
TRIPPODS PRODUCER TALKS	26	BOOK WORLD	45
ADAM ADAMANT APPRAISAL	30	STARBURST DATA BANK	46

While television as a mass medium continues to evolve, TV SF has not so much been standing still, as slowly, yet steadily, reversing away from the subtlety and depth of vision of such series as *The Outer Limits*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The Invaders*, the first season of *Star Trek* and various later episodes, and the occasional TV movie thereafter. Looking at such relatively recent fare as *Buck Rogers*, *Battleship Galactica*, TV SF seems to have returned in spirit and content to the early days of *Captain Video* and *Tom Corbett*.

The Golden Years

Indeed, the TV SF series during the sixties seem very much a product of their time, and in the excellent company of such television classics as *The Naked City*, *Route 66*, *Arrest And Trial*, *The Untouchables*, *Maverick*, *Dragnet* and others. Today, the pioneering spirit of these series from the "Golden Years" of television is fought for and kept alive by a small circle of creative talents, such as the producers of *Lou Grant* and *Hill Street Blues*, who find themselves dwarfed by larger studios content to produce glamorous trash. Television "drama" is dominated by *Dynasty* and *Dallas* and its clones, while series such as *Chicago Story* and *Cagney And Lacey* fold or compromise.

Missing Link?

Television SF itself might be the bridge, for which puzzled

• OPINION •



The guru of SF TV - Rod Serling - directs.

film students have been vainly searching, between those early fifties SF classics, like the *War Of The Worlds*, *Forbidden Planet* and *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, and the films of the late sixties and early seventies, such as *2001*, *Planet Of The Apes*, *Soylent Green*, and *The Man Who Fell To Earth*... before *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, *Alien*, *Flash Gordon* and *Superman* took cinematic SF back to the basics for the cycle to begin anew. TV SF in the sixties is clearly the true descendant, politically and stylistically, of those fifties cinematic fantasies.

A quick look at some of the other credits of the two most pivotal sixties TV SF creators, Rod Serling and Joseph Stefano, reveals some of the threads. Rod Serling contributed to the scripting of *Planet Of The Apes*, and his style is certainly present, lending the film a sense of wonder and tightness of form that subsequent chapters of the saga did not possess. Joseph Stefano's earlier script credits include Hitchcock's *Psycho*, and this is also apparent in certain episodes of *The Outer Limits*.

As an interesting aside, both these creators also knew that the root of all fear lay in childhood memories, which is a realisation recently exploited in a quite different and decidedly less subtle manner, in the trend of Hollywood horror movies begun by *Halloween* and its "Bogeyman" theme. However, subsequent imitations have had a considerably more reactionary stance.

Jon Abbott

• LETTERS •

TV PARTY TONIGHT!

Whilst *Ghostbusters* looks like being very good, I wonder if any film merits the coverage which *Starburst 76* gave over to it. I think issues which devote themselves practically exclusively to one film like this one, or your former *Krull* edition are a mistake in that massive coverage of the mega-hits usually mean neglect of other areas which you are also supposed to cover.

Television especially seems to have suffered in the pages of *Starburst*. This is sad in that the beginning of 1984 promised well for *Starburst* television coverage and also there has been a recent revival in television fantasy which is crying out for attention.

At the time of writing for instance, the BBC's *Tripods* series is into the eleventh week of a thirteen week season and yet *Starburst* hasn't run a feature on it. For my money it has been an excellent series. The *Tripods* themselves may be less than convincing at times but the general atmosphere of a planet under subjugation has been put over to great effect. The acting has been of a very high calibre throughout as have been the production values. It is difficult to breath new life into the tired 'quest' plot, but the search for the White Mountains as described in *Tripods* has been vital and exciting.

In addition to *Tripods* the BBC has recently started an all-star production of *The Box of Delights*. With only one episode screened so far I cannot comment to any great length on this programme apart from saying that it appears that the special effects seem to be as lavish and convincing as is the acting. Surely, with the mixture of live action and animation on this scale, in addition to the C.S.O. work, this merits a mention in *Starburst*.

With these to contend with, we are still waiting for an in-depth *Starburst* look at Gerry Anderson's hilarious *Terra-hawks*. Now coming to the end of its second season this excel-



Above: A slim Jim Kirk and assistant Teresa, from an early episode of *Star Trek*, seem delighted at *Starburst's* long awaited coverage of TV fantasy. Below: Steed investigates some problems with puppets in *The Avengers*, but where's Gerry Anderson?

lent series is both watchable in its own right and yet also serves as a glorious send-up/tribute of Anderson's former work. Surely such a clever, amusing and technically flawless work deserves more than a few words in your pages.

Along with these major Fantasy series the BBC are running their Future Tense series of science-fiction films. I realise that most of these are tired old

war horses which they often trundle out like *Logan's Run* and *Dark Star*, but a page previewing the series would not have gone amiss especially in introducing lesser known films in it such as *Phase IV*.

In addition, Channel Four is serving fantasy fans well with its repeat showing of the black and white episodes of *The Avengers*. I know *Starburst* has looked at this series before

(and when will the Tara King episode guide finally appear?) but a few words to help newcomers would have been welcome, as would a column on McGoonan's *Danger Man* which is currently running on Channel Four. Whilst not strictly fantasy, the gradual introduction of gadgets and its connection with the other McGoonan series *The Prisoner* both thematically and in production teams means that such a column would not have been out of place in *Starburst*.

So with all this going on, *Star Trek* into another repeat and the new *Doctor Who* season, *Starburst* has abundant material and no excuses not to include far more coverage in its pages on Television fantasy.

And when you've got through that lot, how about an archive feature on old children's fantasy series such as the upper *Act of Wands* and the ghastly *Tomorrow People*?

Sasha Simic,
High Wycombe,
Bucks.



After amazing me with issue 75, I'm afraid that still I am not satisfied. You may have done some terrific coverage on *V*, but haven't you neglected other fantasy and science fiction television somewhat?

This year we have received far more fantasy/sci-fi TV than usual. From America we've had *Knight Rider*, *Automan*, *Blue Thunder* and *Manimal*. From Britain: *Terrahawks*, *The Invisible Man* and now *Tri-pods*. Surely you would have been able to get material from our homeland.

Of course, not all these programmes are incredibly good, but I think they at least deserve looking at.

Come on *StARBURST*, let's keep you your former slogan, shall we? 'The magazine of cinema and television fantasy'.

Chris Magee,
Shirley,
Southampton.



Above: Hoyt Axton, the incessant inventor from *Gremlins*, dials home, as does the heavily disguised Robbie the Robot.

Well this is the issue you've been waiting for, telly addicts. For more coverage of TV, both old and new, stay tuned to channel *StARBURST*.

ENLIGHTENMENT

May I say how refreshing it is to have such a thoroughly enlightening magazine as *StARBURST* on the news-stands. For once, instead of having a self-indulgent magazine for the fantasy/sci-fi/horror film buff, I have found a magazine with items that make it accessible to fledgling fans of the genre and plain browsers. Its criticisms are fair and reasonably unbiased except when films have the names Broccoli, Salkind or Moore involved. The features are varying and informative; especially the inter-

views, particularly Debra Hill, Ron Howard, John Sayles and Joe Dante (whose latest film, *Gremlins*, is by far the more amusing and inventive than the indulgent humour of *Ghostbusters*). The reviews, the wit of John Brosnan, the informative Richard Holliss; overall this is the thing that brightens the nights in the ewoks tree villages.

Grant Hobson,
Buckley,
Clwyd.

NO GOATS!

Just a few lines on your excellent magazine. I have purchased and kept every issue of *StARBURST* and shall continue to do so. The articles are all written in an intelligent and entertaining way. Without being

heavy (ie discussing the underlying metaphor of an Hungarian 9-hour documentary about garden gnomes, etc.) you make your point. The interviews are very well conducted (ie the interviewee is not asked questions like 'Is it true your 7th wife divorced you because she found out about you and that goat, etc.'). The approach of the writers is done in such a fashion, one feels one is actually talking to them rather than reading an article. How anyone takes John Brosnan as serious as some of your readers appear to is beyond me. Mr Brosnan writes a very witty column and makes some good points about films. I don't necessarily agree with everything he says, but I still enjoy his articles. He is entitled to his own opinion as much as any-

one; after all, 'It's Only a Movie'.

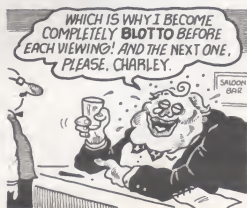
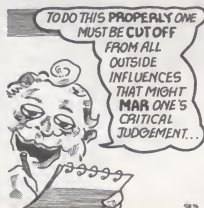
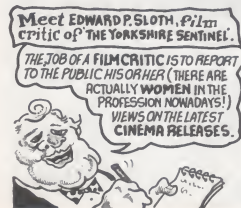
Column P. Laurelle
Crumlin, Ireland.

HYPE-BUSTERS

Why is such a big fuss being made over *Ghostbusters* when there is a much better film on release (ie *Gremlins*)? In my opinion, they are both good films but *Ghostbusters* has an overall 'sloppy' feel about it compared to the tight, compact atmosphere of *Gremlins*. Also, why is *Gremlins* certified '15' in England and 'PG' in Ireland? I would have thought *Gremlins* was 'great for the kids!' as the famous film director once said.

Samuel Hain,
Finglas South,
Ireland.

FLICKERS by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett



Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

STEVEN / KING!

Add one more movie to the elastic schedule of Steven Spielberg. He's bought (at last!) the latest Stephen King best-seller, *The Talisman*, which is not just the latest King but the latest Peter Straub, too. The two pals wrote this 'monster a minute' number in harness. Or, linked across the 400 miles from Straub's Connecticut home and King's in Maine, by their word-processors.



It is, in fact, the book King first told me of under a Cannes sun in 1982. "We never divided it up into chapters or anything," he said. "Neither one of us outlines a lot, but in this case we outlined everything. We just carved this total synopsis up like a Christmas goose. He writes his bit and he calls me up on the phone, pushes a button and I see the stuff come up in three minute bursts on my screen - and from that to an analogue disc."

King had the accident... Having pressed one button to underline something in one of his portions of the book, he pressed another to cancel the autoscore. He pushed CANCEL, instead. "It's scary sending stuff to Data Heaven." (Even then, he came out all right. He wrote a short story about word processors. Press CANCEL in that one and people disappear!)

Well, *The Talisman* is out and striking the No. 1 spot in both the Time and New York Times best-sellers lists immediately, as only to be expected of the first teaming of the Almighty King and the Ghost Story writer. Not that Time's critic, John Skow, was overly impressed. "The horrors there on the page are visually ingenious but they never echo in the mind... Enchantment fails." Skow, it seemed, was more concerned with the Amblin hype. He saw the book only as the first stage in the construction - "the scaffolding and a few truckloads of apparitions" - of a Spielberg movie. Certainly, the tale has Spielberg written all over it. The hero is a 12-year-old lad. There's a part made for Scatman Crothers. Only real change from the Spiel-norm is that the kid's mother is an old movie queen and dying from cancer.

Setting off on his quest for the cure-all talisman, young Jack Sawyer enters a parallel world of rather too many nasties, from werewolves to nuked wastes and, like Dorothy in *Oz*, finds everyone from his world has a clone or 'twinner' there...

COPYBURGERS

Whether directing or producing it, Spielberg will supply the missing enchantment in *The Talisman*. That's his great gift. One that is woefully absent from the first of the Spielberg rip-off movies. Remember how after *Star Wars* everyone tried copying Lucas. 'Hey, gimme an sf script, some robots and lots SFX. Easy! But it wasn't... Now Spielberg's the target. 'Gimme a kid, a fantasy world and run me up a couple of lovable alien monsters - have 'em fly, right?' Wrong. That's not too easy to replicate, either.

In one week, I've suffered *Dream One* and *The Never Ending Story*. Both have some virtue. Like, they finish. Both suffer from lack of soul, identity, direction. Most exciting element was working out who was dubbed - to make the whole thing sound all-American. Only all-American kids have fantasy lives, didn't you know that? Wait till you hear *Peter Pan* speak! (That could be a longer wait than we thought, by the way).

Of the two, Wolfgang Peterson's film is eminently superior to Arnaud Selnagac's meeting of the Boorman clan: Katrine and Charley over-acting; Telse co-writing; Dad co-producing. Peterson's also has the more correct title. Believe me, there'll never be a *Dream Two* - and Wolfgang's bang goes on and on. And on. I doubt, though, if I saw the US print which Spielberg helped tighten in the editing.

ALIEN II

...is alive and well and on the drawing board. Ex-Cormanite James Cameron has finished his script for

the original producers. Shooting should be underway before the summer's out. Possible choice for director could be Jim (Terminator) Cameron.

OH NO!

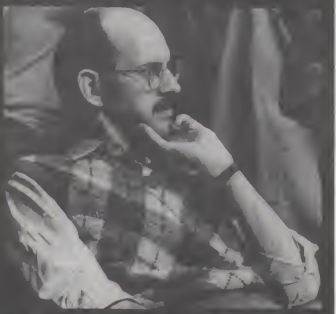
Just when you thought it safe to sign up for summer camp - for-get it! That series ain't done with, yet. After *Friday The 13th - The Final Chapter* (hah!)... will you welcome please, *Friday The 13th - A New Beginning*.

Yeah, don't tell me, Jason had this 12-year-old kid with a grudge 'cos no one would put him in pictures... Little Tommy sure looked like Jason at the freeze-frame climax to *IV*, didn't he?

HORRORS OR OZ

If Steven Spielberg has added a film to his roster, does that mean he's dropped one? Sure does. Steven and Martin Scorsese have given up their 3-D musical plans for *The Little Shop of*

Horrors. The horrors go on, though, shooting in London in the late Spring. Disc man David Geffen, who produced the Broadway show, will be producing Howard Ashman's movie script with Muppeteer Frank Oz in the director's chair.



Frank Oz, the 'Muppet Man', to direct *The Little Shop Of Horrors*.

MORE STEVEN

Then again, Spielberg would appear to have plucked another movie right out of the ether. Universal told all the buyers at the Mified movie market in Milan that it would be releasing Amblin's *Back to the Future* on June 21. Now that's a Spielberg project I have to admit I've ab-so-lute-ly never heard of before. (Same goes, it seems, for UIP in London). Watch this space. But what happened to Amblin's *Fandango*. . . ? It's made, shot, edited, finished and. . . shelved?

STILL MORE. . .

The Amblin' number I do know about, *Goonies*, started shooting at Warner Brothers on October 22. This one re-unites the *Gremlins* back-room folk: Steven, Frank Marshall, Kathy Kennedy as executive producers and Chris Columbus as scripter. They're leaving thereal work to *Superman* director Richard Donner and his *Omen* sidekick, Harvey Bernhard.

Star of the action is Ke Ruy Huan, alias Short Round from *The Temple of Doom* — the first youngstar Spielberg has used twice, incidentally. Everyone else is unknown (for now) though the cast does feature a couple of second generation thespians: Sean Astin, the son of actress Patty Duke and actor director John Astin; and James Brolin's lad, Josh. Spielberg once directed his Pa in a *Marcus Welby* episode in 1970.



From *The Temple Of Doom* to *Goonies*, Ke Ruy Huan stars.

MORE STEPHEN

Gary Busey, still fondly remembered for his amazing Buddy Holly movie, has completed Stephen King's *Silver Bullet*, down in North

Carolina. Which must mean it's a *Dino* movie. And if you don't know the *King* short story, I'm not altogether surprised. 'Twas originally published as *Cycle of the Werewolf*, you see.

BUECHLER BOOM

It's always the IMagicians, Rick Baker, Richard Edlund, Carlo Rambaldi, Rob Bottin (working on Joe Dante's *Explorers*) winning the headlines and the in-depth magazine hosannahs. But the busiest SPFXer in Hollywood has to be John Buechler and his MMI troupe — Mechanical and Make-Up Imageries. John's the in-house effectician for the man who would be Corman, Charles Band. So John works on most everything Charlie throws up for (or on) his Empire International label. At last count, that's ten of the latest dozen features Charlie's Empire is striking back with. Ten effects movies in twelve months — that must be a record for one SPFXman. And he only arrived in Hollywood in 1978.

John and his team have finished up on Jeffrey Byron's *The Dungeonmaster* (ex-Ragewar, except it still is called that in some countries); *Trancers*, introducing a Mad-Eastwoodish hero called Jack Deth, no less; and *Ghoulies*, Charlie's answer to *Gremlins*.

Since December, the Buechler brood has been all systems go on *Troll*, full of quirky-looking Buechler thingies. December also saw shooting begin on *Eliminators*, best described as *Sons of Terminator* as his hit-squad numbers one mercenary, one scientist, a ninja and — a Buechler special — one 'mandroid'.

Come the Spring, John and his obviously tireless elves will have no time to be picking daisies. It's all stops out for the long-delayed and no longer 3D *Journeys Through The Dark Zone*, 'a place where pleasure ends,' says Charlie, who's directing, 'and terror begins'. He makes it sound like Wembley Stadium on Cup Final day. Then — take a deep breath — John's committed to effects for *Shackled, Alterego, Zone Troopers* (dropping inter-galactic warriors in the midst of World War II) and *Laserblast II*, Charlie Band's long-promised sequel to the 1978 mini-hit which made him what he is today.



A Buechler troll, looking suspiciously like a certain U.S. president.

SANTA CLAWS!

Question: What's a video-nasty called before it's on tape? Answer: *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night* — judging by the fury this film caused in America just before the holidays. Young mums were up in arms about it. Cinemas were picketed with Scargillian intensity. And, in a few cases, the mums won. The cinemas gave in and the movie was withdrawn. Why? Well, you could call it *Slay Ride* or *I'm Dreaming Of A Red Christmas*. It's a grisly horror piece, though no more so than the norm, in which the decapitator of various humans happens to be. . . cuddly old Santa himself. Or, Robert Brian Wilson on Santa duty at a big toy store.

Bob's on this rampage 'cos, well, his folks were wasted by a guy in St. Nick drag when he was but an impressionable kiddy. That, plus orphanage life, put him off the Yuletide cheer bit for life. So, going to work in a toy shop and agreeing to play Santa is a trifle out of character, wouldn't you say. No matter. First, he scares the spines out of Santa's little visitors. Then, he wages war on adults — impaling one on a handy pair of antelope horns.

Scrooge would adore it! Young mums, calling themselves in one case, *Citizens Against Movie Madness*, did not. Not that they'd seen the movie. (Of course not!) But tele-blurbs and trailers ('You made it through Halloween, now try to survive Christmas!') were enough to send them into the streets. Fighting. Yelling. 'Think of our kids!' 'How can you treat Santa this way?' 'He's more like Jason in Friday 13th!'

Let me warn them, the 'true' story of Little Red Riding Hood and Goldilocks is due next in. . . Freaky Fairy Tales.

omy Crawley's • THINGS TO COME •

SANTA WARS

One irony about the killer-Santa film — it's released in the US by Tri-Star, the same company due to distribute the Salkinds' Santa Claus epic next Yuletide. If, that is, any of us will be interested in it by then. I doubt it because there's a surfeit of Santas — a real Santa wars, in fact — going on out there in movieland.

The French got in first with *Here Comes Santa Claus*, a musical with good-looking French chanteuse, Karen Cheryl, which was lavishly released in America by Corman's old New World combine. Next out should be *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* from Earl Owensby, the 3D King of North Carolina. His movie is based on the book by the Wizard of Oz author, Frank Baum.



Here comes... another one? A French Santa, with music yet.

steel-lined bunker as they'd hoped. (They forgot the air vents). And, well, if they don't get a lot of plasma, real, warm, human blood, real soon, they'll never concoct the serum to stop them turning into the zombies prowling the L.A. streets.



Catherine May Stewart comes down to earth for *Night Of The Comet*.

EAST INDIES!

Italy continues ripping off Indiana Jones. Anthony M. Dawson (actually Antonio Margheriti) has joined 'em with *Jungle Raiders*, with the old Peyton Place soap star Christopher Connolly in

Indy drag and Ernest Borgnine being nasty. Hollywood producer Sandy Howard, though, has decided that Indy is out now. He's re-named his *Secrets of the Phantom Caverns* to... *What Waits Below*. Why not *Cave Busters*, Sandy?

POLISH DRAGON

Not enough Polish films have been made (not seen, anyway) since martial law locked up the land in 1981. Warsaw studios are finally humming again. The most intriguing venture is a US-Polish co-production, *White Dragon*. Christopher Allport, from *Savage Weekend* and tv's *Atlanta Child Murders*, is the first actor confirmed for this fantasy special. If nothing else, it should have a great poster. Polish movie posters are the best in the world — as proved every year by the buffs stealing them off the Polish stand at the Cannes festival. Myself, included. I cannot tell a lie!

KILLER COMET

Last Starfighter's girl, Catherine Mary Stewart, and Eating Raoul's Robert Beltran and the sublime Mary Woronov are part of the fun in *Night of the Comet*, a far better example of low-budget sf than usually found from over yonder. Tom Eberhardt is the writer/director. His last film was *Sole Survivor*. He has a few more this time. And influences from *V*, the old *Triffids*, *Five* (1951), etc.

Tom's whole world is watching a comet unseen since the dinosaurs clocked it 65 million years ago. Tough for the world — as the comet's rays are ultra-deadly (which could explain the demise of the dinosaurs). Catherine and Kelli Maroney are a tough pair of sisters. Mary and Geoffrey Lewis are the mad scientists, madder by the minute once they find they weren't as well protected within their

V STUMBLES

V, I'm afraid to say, doesn't stand for victory, anymore. The series format, which grew more by greed than public demand, out of the two mini-series films, has not been doing so well in the US tv ratings game. The whole shooting match could be cancelled by the time you read this. And that's a pity. The series started off well enough, neatly taking over from where the last mini left off. Marc Singer's Donovan even captured the beautifully wicked Diana (Jane Badler 'n' beautiful). But, of course, she got away. This was supposed to be a series, right? From there on, though, the weekly ventures dropped. The audiences, did, anyway. And at \$900,000 per hour, just \$25,000 less than the most expensive tv show (*Hill Street Blues*), that's rather too much for NBC to take low-ratings chances with... The budget is higher than *Battlestar Galactica* was and that was killed off for much the same reasons.



FEMALE INDY

Laurene Landon's first film since *Hundra* used to be campy Western called *Yellow Hair* and *The Pecos Kid*. She did so well as a shemale

Conan that she's now seen as a female Indy Jones. Her Western's title and hype have been revamped as *Yellow Hair* and *The Fortress of Gold*.

BRIAN'S HITCH

If you want a punch-up with Brian De Palma, just tell him his films are Hitchcockian. He used to agree yet daims to be more like Eisenstein these days. Rubbish! *Body Double*, not as hot as its publicity sounds, is the De Palma mix as before. I mean how many times can a guy keep on re-making *Vertigo*?

LIGHTS. . . !

Joe Dante's trendy (ie. child) *Explorers* are played by some heroic sounding kids: Ethan Hawke, Jason Presson and, best of all, River Phoenix. . . Indy's first gal, Karen Allen, is making a Robert Redford backed movie, *Animal Behaviour*, in Albuquerque. . . The *Airwolf* tele-series which copied and beat *Blue Thunder* has finally crashed. The pilot film is due here as a cinema movie, though. . . *Supergirl* Helen Slater's untitled movie for Matthew Robbins has a name at last: *Fair Is Fair*. . . Videos pay off. Jermaine Jackson, brother of Him, guests in Pia Zadora's *Voyage of the Rock Aliens*. So does Ruth Gordon. . . Sam Jones flashes his gordon anew in *Jungle Heat*, a Hong Kong 'Nam movie. . . Patrick Macnee has been back home here making *Shadey*. . . John Sayles switches from alien brothers to baseball for *Eight Men Out*. . . The word is the next 007 title tune is coming from Duran Duran. Frankie would be a better choice. Then again anything's better than Limahl on *The Never Ending Soundtrack*. . . David Bowie guests as an Arab heavy in John Landis' *Into The Night*. A blond Arab?



Above: Bowie as an Arab? Watch for it in *Into The Night*. Right: Volunteers Tom Hanks and John Candy clown around on *Splash*.

CAMERA. . . !

Tobe Hooper follows *Lifeforce* (ex-Space Vampires) with *Invaders From Mars* (ex-1953). The oldie has been recomposed – or decomposed – by his *Lifeforce* scribes, Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby. . . Bond blonde Lynn Holly Johnson is after *The Treasure* in Mexico, directed by Sergio Ohlovich. Well, that's his story. . . *Buck Rogers* flies again! Gil Gerard trying yet another tv series with *Runway*, which is obviously *Airport* scaled down. . . The first beauty that killed King Kong, Fay Wray, let slip in Paris that she's penning her autobiography. So, the truth at last about Kong's censored scenes, perhaps. . . A new movie of Neville Shute's *On The Beach*, a kind of week-before-the-bomb drama, being planned and, inevitably, touted as being truer to the book than Stanley Kramer's 1959 effort. Tony Perkins could take Fred Astaire's old role this time, huh? . . . Klaus Kinski's *Titan Find*, unfurled at the Paris SF Festival, is, by my reckoning, his 140th movie in 37 years. . .



& AKK-SHUN!

Stan Lee's Marvel-ous *Captain America* heads to the big screen in James R. Silke's scenario. . . Top video-clipper, Russell Mulcahy and Brian Grant, due to make *Heavy Metal Live*. . . Sybil Danning has shot her *Private Passions*. Can't (pant! pant!) wait. . . Writer-director Paul Donovan says his *Ground Zero* is about 'the day after the day after'. Oh is it, oh is it? . . . Miles O'Keefe and Sean Connery's *Sword of the Valiant*, vali-ain't any more. Now called *Clash of the Swords*. 'Twas *Gawain* and *The Green Knight* when Stephen Weeks shot his first version in 1972. . . Sean will probably headline Dino's Tai-Pan epic which will be shot in China. . . Nicholas Meyer's first outing since *The Day After* is *Volunteers* with *Splashers* Tom Hanks and John Candy. . . *Supergirl* cut by 20 minutes in America. Won't help it any. . . And in Montreal, Jean-Claude Lord directs statueque Pam Grier in *The Frankenstein Factor* for a company called. . . wait for it. . . Frank & Stein Ltd.



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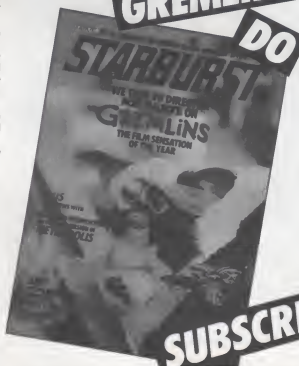
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STAR TREK

With *Star Trek* currently enjoying its last run on BBC Television right now, Starburst's Queen of Trivia, Sally "Bones" Gary, jots down a few thoughts about how the series has fared with the passage of time and reveals a few little known facts about the show.

Star Trek is one of those tv phenomena that seems to make hardcore science fiction fans see red, yet has survived with its own following and won the admiration of a much broader audience since the series was cancelled, back in 1969. Almost immediately, it began appearing on the BBC network in Britain, which was when I first became aware of Kirk, Spock and all.

Science fiction fans and John Brosnan notwithstanding, *Star Trek* was and is a good tv show. Especially when compared to what was being churned out by the American tv studios at the same time. I mean, *Lost in Space*. ... really! (Everybody must know the old story by now about how the CBS network turned *Star Trek* down because they already had their own sf show. ... yep, *Lost in Space*!)

Just what it was that made *Star Trek* so good has been analysed in dozens of books and fanzines, and I have no intention of raking over those old coals here. Rather, this is a collection of personal thoughts and favourite trivia items from the three years that went to make up *Trek's* 79 episodes.

I remember one of the first things that surprised me when I first saw *Trek* (was it really 15 years ago?) was that the women characters dressed in trendy mini-skirts and wore contemporary style make-up. Why? Surely female military personnel, on active duty, would have found trousers more comfortable? Bearing in mind that the crew of the *Enterprise* was supposed to be about 400 people, presumably half of them women, where did they keep their spare tights? With that amount of women, they'd have needed another ship to fly behind the *Enterprise*, just to carry the nylons.

Then there were all the other women that the crew of the *Enterprise* – well, Captain Kirk, really – met on their voyages. Great little costumes most of them were nearly wearing.

See, where the sf fans have gone wrong in looking at *Star Trek* was that it wasn't, and could never be, pure science fiction. Producer Gene Roddenberry knew that he had to disguise his science fiction to make it acceptable to the pre-*Star Wars* general audiences. The skimpy costumes didn't really detract from the sf stories being told, and most men I know still remember the girls' costumes better than anything else about *Trek*. So it worked.



The costume designer on *Trek* was a guy called Bill Theiss. His problem was that he had to make the *Trek* costumes as revealing as possible, without incurring the wrath of the Broadcast Standards Department. It was quite easy, really. There was a clear list of do's and don't's when it came to what you could show on network tv in those days. You couldn't show the underside of a breast. You could show as much of the topside as you liked, but the underneath was a no-no. The navel was also forbidden territory... just don't ask!

Theiss got around this problem using the "Will they/won't they" approach. He figured that the girls' costumes would look sexier according to how insecure he could make them look. That is, a girl's costume seems more... interesting if it looks like she's going to fall out of it any second. Hence, will she/won't she.



Another approach Theiss used was to bare parts of the body that were harmless enough, but weren't normally seen naked. Like, for example, revealing an actress' leg from the ankle to the hip. And it worked. But these approaches

were not without their problems.

With most of these costumes, bras were out. Which meant that Theiss had to find other means to keep the boobs he worked with firmly in their place. After all, they were only supposed to look as if they might fall out any second.

Some of the more notable costumes were to be found on Leslie Parrish in *Who Mourns for Adonis*, Sherry Jackson in *What Are Little Girls Made Of?* and Angelique Pettyjohn in *The Gamemasters of Triskelion*.

Another key factor in the *Star Trek* format could be summed up in one word: Spock. While Spock could never have carried the show by himself (William Shatner was recently reported to be receiving twice Leonard Nimoy's *Star Trek 4* film salary of \$2 million) his constantly warring Vulcan and human halves made him the most compelling

Left: William Shatner as Captain James T. Kirk. Above: DeFarrest Kelley as Dr "Bones" McCoy. Right: In *What Are Little Girls Made Of?* Dr Roger Corby (Michael Strong) chats to Kirk, while Ruk (Ted Cassidy) and Andrea (Sherry Jackson) look on. Below: The good ship U.S.S. Enterprise.



supporting character in an sf tv series. Strangely enough, though Spock's parents were mentioned in the third broadcast episode of the show, *The Corbomite Maneuver* – Spock compares the face of Balok with that of his father! – we never did get to meet them until episode 44, *Journey to Babel*.

Still on the subject of Spock, we come to the origin of the famous Vulcan Nerve Pinch. In the script for *The Enemy Within* (ep.5), in which Kirk goes through the transporter system only to emerge as two Kirks, one good the other bad, Spock was to belt the bad Kirk over the noggin ▶

STAR TREK

with the butt of a phaser. Not a very Vulcan gesture, you'll agree. Nimoy himself provided the answer. He demonstrated a routine to director Leo Penn where he gripped the base of Shatner's neck between thumb and forefinger. Kirk went down like a sack of potatoes and the rest – as they say – was history.

Remember those neat little devices Dr McCoy used to use to examine assorted wounded Security men, the frequently deranged Kirk and any alien creatures he might stumble across? They appeared for the first time in the Salt Vampire story, *The Man Trap* (ep.6). The idea was that Kirk was to use alien salt shakers to lure the creature into a trap, so the props department hunted high and low for alien looking salt shakers. When the director, Marc Daniels saw them, he felt that they were too alien and audiences would recognise them for what they were supposed to be. So they became McCoy's medical sensors instead.

Funnily enough, the rubber suit of the Salt Vampire turned up in a later story, *The Squire of Gothos* (ep. 18). It can be seen, quite clearly, propped up near the villain Trelayne's front door (Trelayne is the powerful alien who trapped the Enterprise in a force field and was revealed at the end of the story to be an unruly alien child who had slipped away from his parents for a while).

One of the most bizarre tasks McCoy ever faced was when he encountered the silicon creature in the story *The Devil in the Dark*. In this tale, workers on a mining planet are being picked off, one by one, by an unseen monster. As it happens, when the crew of the Enterprise finally corner the creature, Spock probes its mind and discovers that it is only a mother protecting its young. But not



Above: Susan Oliver as Vina in *The Menagerie*. Below left: Sherry Jackson in *What Are Little Girls Made Of?* Below: A scene from *Amok Time*. Right: Leonard Nimoy as Mr Spock with friend. Far right: Not a behind-the-scenes shot on the set of *Star Trek 4*, but McCoy and Kirk in *The Deadly Years*.



before the unfortunate creature has been seriously hurt by Phaser fire. Kirk asks McCoy if there is anything he can do for the beast, and McCoy delivers one of his best lines in the show: "I'm a Doctor, Jim, not a bricklayer!"

Just about the best ever episode of *Star Trek* was *The City on the Edge of Forever*. This was science fiction drama at its best. No monsters, no ray guns, just Captain Kirk faced with the most difficult decision he would ever make in his career. The plot had McCoy accidentally inject himself with a crazy drug and leapt screaming through a portal to the past, where he ended up in New York during the depression. Kirk and Spock decide they have to go after him and in doing so Kirk meets a nurse, Edith Keeler (played by Joan Collins in her pre-*Dynasty* days) who spends all her time caring for the poor and campaigning for peace. It's

Edith who has taken care of McCoy until Kirk and Spock arrive (tricky stuff, time travel). Kirk falls in love with Edith only to discover that he must let her die so she won't delay America's entry into World War 2 through her peace efforts. A tough one for the Captain. The tale was written by the caustic Harlan Ellison, though much has been made of the fact that the script was substantially rewritten by the series' producer Gene Roddenberry (The original Ellison version can be found in *Six Science Fiction Plays*, Pocket Books, 1976).

What made this such a powerful segment of the series was in its basic plot. The idea that Kirk had to make an agonising decision made *The City at the Edge of Forever* not just great *Star Trek*, but great drama, too. When you think about it, there's only so many stories that could be done within the *Trek* Format.

Kirk changes alien civilisation for the better. Kirk defeats slimy monster. Kirk outsmarts super-computer. And Kirk must chose between the Enterprise and...

The Choice story is far and away the most compelling in this short list. The other plot-lines are just hack adventure stuff that we've all seen dozens of times before. Even the choice story is predictable. We know that Kirk is going to chose the Enterprise over Edith. But we suffer along with him as he makes that inevitable decision. And there's nothing any of us like better than to watch our heroes suffer.

The last episode of the first season marked the first and only story in which William Shatner appeared in a role other than that of Captain Kirk. The plot involved the invasion of an Earth colony by flying jellyfish that entered the victim's nervous system and gave him a hard time. And it just happens that the infected planet is the home of Jim Kirk's brother, sister-in-law and nephew. When the Captain finds the dead body of his brother, we can see that Shatner is playing both parts. As the corpse of George Samuel Kirk, Shatner has grey hair and a moustache.



While Kirk was suffering his way through this story as a bereaved relative, Spock was suffering in a much more physical way. His alien system invaded by the flying jellyfish, Spock spent most of the episode fighting off the controlling powers of the creatures, evidently in very great pain. Nimoy's acting performance was just dynamite and went a long way to saving a rather ho-hum story.

The stories I've considered here are all first season episodes. Space dictates that I'll have to leave the second season for another time... and the less said about *Star Trek's* third season, the better.

But *Trek* fans can take heart that the Enterprise will continue to cruise the Galaxy as long as the feature films continue to rake in the box-office dollars. And right now that looks like it'll be for a long time to come. Tough luck, Mr Brosnan!

There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. For the next hour, sit quietly and we will control all you see and hear in. . .

THE OUTER Limits

An Appreciation by Jon Abbott

The Sixties produced a few exceptional television SF series, yet widespread acclaim always seems to settle on Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits*. Jon Abbott looks at the latter, the brainchild of co-producers Leslie Stevens and Joseph Stefano.

One thing that most SF television series have in common is that they're loved by some and hated by others. Every major SF series has had its admirers and detractors, with *Star Trek*, *Lost In Space*, *Space: 1999* and *Battlestar Galactica* all having come under critical fire at one time or another. . . yet in all the articles, magazines and reference books on SF, in all the casual throwaway references made in newspapers or other non-SF publications, it seems that no one has ever had a bad word for the general quality and sophistication of *The Outer Limits*. This is a reputation that no other SF show, save perhaps its companion anthology series of the period, *The Twilight Zone* has ever enjoyed or, for that matter, deserved. *The Outer Limits* was, and still is, unique.

Whilst neither series is entirely without faults, a weak episode of either is still light years ahead of anything ever presented on such relatively recent fare as *Space: 1999* or *Battlestar Galactica*. Ironically, the latter series has one interesting link with *The Outer Limits* – Leslie Stevens. He was a creative force on both series, which suggests, given Steven's



later association with such diverse fare as *The Time Tunnel*, *Search* (a.k.a. *Search Control*) and *The Invisible Man*, as well as mainstream productions like *It Takes A Thief*, *McCloud*, and *The Name Of The Game*, that the guiding light behind the distinctive look of *The Outer Limits* was his partner in the series, Joseph Stefano.

SETTING THE STANDARD

The pilot film, "The Galaxy Being", inevitably embraced most of the SF themes that were to become hallmarks of *The Outer Limits*, and was the model on which the series' writers were instructed to base their own contributions. "The Galaxy Being" starred Cliff Robertson, only recently out of his *Rod Brown Of The Rocket Rangers* spacesuit, who played a scientist who makes radio, and eventually visual, contact with an alien being. He becomes obsessed by his discovery and, when his experiments attract the attention of his neighbours and the authorities, the alien, who has already been transmitted via the radio waves to Earth, commits suicide rather than let himself fall into human hands. In the true spirit of extra-terrestrial visitors, the alien bears mankind no grudge, but looks forward to the day when he and his kind will be greeted by something other than weapons and hostility.

Stevens is justifiably credited with creating the style of *The Outer Limits*, and making the series possible. Although his later contributions to U.S. TV (including "The Black Answer", a pioneering anti-racism episode of *The Name Of The Game* that paved the way for such exemplary civil rights dramas as *The Bold Ones* and *Hill Street Blues*) earn him a place in the industry's Hall of Fame, his input in *The Outer Limits*, following the scripting, direction and production of "The Galaxy Being", was minimal. He worked on only three of the weaker episodes in the first season, with most of the load being carried on the able and willing shoulders of Stefano.

STAMP OF STYLE

The careers of Stevens and Stefano leading up to their creation of *The Outer Limits* reads like a fantasy of a different, but no less extraordinary kind. At the age of 15, Stevens found a summer job touring with Orson Welles as a "gopher" (a sort of glorified tea-boy - "you go-fer this, go-fer that"), and later ran away from home to keep the job. Stevens received a valuable and unique apprenticeship that would have been the envy of many. Stefano, on the other hand, was an established writer of screenplays, but it was his script for Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* that made his name and reputation. Thus, with a combined educational background that boasted the experience of working for the two most distinguished film-makers of their time, Stevens and Stefano were well equipped to handle the demands of a series such as *The Outer Limits*, and to



Opposite Page: The Spiders from Mars? No, the deadly Zanti Misfits, alien criminals exiled on earth. Above: Trading Places; intellect and emotion, in *Keeper Of The Purple Twilight*.

If you believe in something, if you are angry or disturbed about something, or exasperated with joy or shaken with worry about something, be it conformity, discrimination, politics, censorship, patriotism, capital punishment, disarmament, man's inaccessibility to man, or fame or famine, moral or physical slavery, or addiction, mass culture, or fanaticism or isolation, or peace, you have the thread. And all the rest is craft and art and intellect.

Joseph Stefano

muster up the technical enthusiasm and knowledge to make it work.

Stefano was brought in as a co-producer by Stevens shortly before production on the actual series commenced, while Stevens, as president of Daystar, and wearing several other hats as executive producer, writer and director, went on to oversee further pilots for hopeful future series.

The Outer Limits set itself very high standards of content and presentation and, more often than not, these were achieved. Stefano ensured the quality and sophistication of his creation by using writers familiar with, or active in, the SF genre, such as Meyer (Mike) ▶



Far Left: An alien captain welcomes an unsuspecting passenger aboard his craft in *Second Chance* (aka *Joy Ride*). Above: "Not Guilty!" Morgan the Robot on trial for murdering his creator in *Robot*.

THE OUTER LIMITS

► Dolinsky, David Duncan, Harlan Ellison and Jerry Sohl. Many of them (and the other *Outer Limits* writers) went on to write for other SF television productions, including *Star Trek* and those of Irwin Allen, most notably *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*, which not only inherited *The Outer Limits*' original time-slot but also a number of its writers and directors.

The Outer Limits did not look like the conventional U.S. TV product, as many of those connected with Daystar had influences and interests that extended beyond traditional Hollywood styles and approaches. In an interview with American writer Steven Spires in 1980, Leslie Stevens put it down to the optimism of the Kennedy era and the belief fostered by those years that they'd (Daystar) "really be able to make some dent in the mass mediocrity of television".

The Outer Limits owed much of its visual style not just to the pilot by Stevens, and Stefano's clarity of vision, but also to the expressionist influences and film noir preferences of cinematographer Conrad Hall and director Gerd Oswald. The latter directed 16 of the 49 episodes, helming at least half of the show's 'masterpieces' and none of the few real duds.

Naturally a title as original for the series as *The Outer Limits* did not come out of thin air, and Stevens and Stefano were constantly toying with the name for their new anthology show right up until airtime, as were the network. The series was known under several names during pre-production, including *Please Stand By* and *Beyond Control*, before it eventually became *The Outer Limits*.



Above: An Ebonian about to submit his earthling captives to some intensive interrogation in *Nightmare*. Bottom Left: An unlikely looking father comes to reclaim his brilliant earth offspring in *Children Of Spider County*. Above Right: "I am the greatest!" A boomerang wielding contestant fights to the death in *Fun And Games*.

FALL FROM THE HEIGHTS

The episodes in the first season usually moved along at a cracking pace, with the bizarre camera angles, dramatic musical score and straight-faced, yet larger than life, performances creating a constant mood of suspense, hysteria or desperation. The ratings grew steadily, and the ABC network found themselves with an unexpected hit on their hands.

Unfortunately, the verve of the first season didn't carry through to the second, which was produced by Ben Brady after Stefano resigned. Stefano's resignation came as the culmination of a long standing dispute with the network over their continual refusal to allow him to direct, and eventually over an ill considered shift in the show's time slot from Monday night to Saturday night.

Episodes from the second season that might have succeeded as routine examples of SF film, watchable entertainment

to while away a rainy afternoon, were disappointing, and even laughable, simply because the first season showed such tremendous promise. Had Brady's episodes appeared as an entirely different series, they might have been regarded more favourably, but they still could not have matched Stefano's *The Outer Limits*.

Ultimately, the more traditional toned-down approach to science fiction proffered by Brady failed to attract enough viewers away from the more mainstream Saturday night fare, and the show's audience fell away severely. *The Outer Limits* was cancelled in mid-season.

THE BRITISH VIEW

In Britain the show was originally broadcast by ITV, which inevitably meant that it became lost around the various ITV regions. With the advent of colour televi-



sion, and its novelty and status toward the end of the Sixties, there was no opportunity for a black and white series receiving a rescreening at any hour. Consequently *The Outer Limits*, together with a number of many other classic TV shows, disappeared from circulation.

When the BBC purchased the series after a considerable absence from UK screens, the show was used as a follow-up to the Commission's rapidly diminishing supply of Fifties monster movies and Hammer films for its Saturday late night film slot. All 49 episodes sat on the shelf for well over a year during the limited period the BBC had acquired the rights for them, and could be shown only once before they realised they had something special on their hands. To the BBC's surprise the series turned out to be a phenomenal success. It became a cult show with younger viewers, who naturally hadn't seen the series before,

Each play must have a Bear. The Bear is that one splendid, staggering, shuddering effect that induces awe and wonder, or tolerable terror, or even merely conversation or wonderment. There must be no apology or smirk; each drama, no matter how wordless or timeless, must be spoken with all the seriousness and sincerity and suspension of disbelief that a caring and intelligent parent employs in the spinning of a tale to a child at bedtime. Humour and wit are honourable; the tongue in cheek is most often condescending and gratuitous. When the tongue is in cheek it is almost impossible to speak in anything but a garbled foolish fashion.

Joseph Stefano

as well as with SF enthusiasts and TV buffs, who had only hazy recollections of the episodes.

The episodes were shown wildly out of sequence, with second season episodes mixed in with the first season's (a problem which has been mostly rectified for the *Twilight Zone* re-runs). For those without an episode guide to hand, the second season episodes could be distinguished by their more melodic and haunting closing theme by Harry Lubin, as opposed to the more threatening, other-worldly theme by Dominic Frontiere for the first.

Although they were aware that they were broadcasting the series out of sequence, the BBC made an effort to start the show with a distinguished episode by beginning their screening of the series with the award-winning "Demon With A Glass Hand", and followed it with "Keeper Of The Purple Twilight" the following week.



Above: It was peace through terror when this bug-eyed beastie was designed by *The Architects Of Fear*. Right: Gary Merrill and Harry Guardino exchange brains when an experiment goes awry in *The Human Factor*.



Feature by Richard Marson

Doomwatch hit the screens of BBC1 one Monday evening in early February 1970. Everything about it was aimed to "discomfort, shock and provoke" and for 13 weeks it enthralled a massive audience with its mix of science fiction, drama and straight factual prophecy.

In the course of that first run it became almost masochistic viewing – terrifying its adult audience in the same way that *Doctor Who* had then been frightening the children of Britain for seven years. Actually it is entirely thanks to *Doctor Who* that *Doomwatch* first saw the light of day: it was through working on the late William Hartnell/early Patrick Troughton period of the series that *Doomwatch*'s creators Dr Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis first met.

Davis was *Doctor Who*'s script editor and it was he who encouraged Pedler's first television scripts (Pedler being responsible for the hugely popular *Cybermen*) and helped him with the basic business of turning an idea into a page of workable dialogue. For his part Davis found Pedler's scientific background invaluable in injecting authenticity into *Doctor Who*. The two men liked each other from the start and quickly discovered that they shared many of the same interests – including a concern for the welfare of the world's ecology. "We thought alike about what was happening to the world," said Davis. "We began to keep scrapbooks about each new devastating hazard to mankind – out of these scrapbooks, and out of literally thousands of examples, *Doomwatch* was born."

ECOLOGICAL WATCHDOGS

Once accorded the all-important go-ahead from the BBC, production on the first series began in 1969 – some three years after Pedler's and Davis' first meeting. The new show was to be made in colour as part of the many changes planned for BBC television in early 1970, and as such, it was apportioned a considerable budget. *Doomwatch* itself was a code-name for an imaginary government department established to maintain a check on the excesses of private scientific research – excesses which might lead to disaster of one sort or another. To this basic premise was added a further realistic twist. *Doomwatch* was to exist only as a sop to public opinion, a government-backed ombudsman team to be seen rather than to act. In fact, the government would be far happier without it, so that it was constantly having to justify its existence to those in authority.

The cast and characters were very carefully chosen, with script editor Davis, scientific adviser Pedler and producer Terence Dudley working closely together to achieve the desired mix. The nominal lead was to be played by John Paul, whose face would be familiar to audiences from earlier successes such as *Probation Officer* and *Emergency*

DOOMWATCH



Ward 10. His character was a Nobel Prize-winning incorruptible scientist, Dr Spencer Quist (Quist, as Davis gleefully points out, being the brand name of a tennis ball!) Naturally aggressive, he was to be the focus of the rest of the team, composed of Simon Oates as Dr John Ridge (described in one paper as "loud-mouthed and trendy") – a man with a passion not just for his job but also for the ladies; and the idealistic Toby Wren, played by the young Robert Powell. The *Doomwatch* team had a secretary, Pat Hunnisett, played by the

attractive Wendy Hall, who, as the press releases said, was guaranteed to brighten any environment! On hand to help – and hinder – the regulars were Joby Blanshard as Colin Bradley and Hamilton Dyce as the departmental Minister responsible for the team – and not liking it at all.

Characterisation was, however, to be a consistent problem, with few of the regulars ever breaking the mould of dramatic stereotype and becoming believable people. The female members of the cast fared particularly badly – and

this is something to which the actresses involved from Wendy Hall in the first season to Elizabeth Weaver in the last, all testified. They were very much token women, a touch of glamour to attract a bit of extra interest from press and public but of no real importance. Typically, Pat Hunnisett was the lowliest member of the team, a blonde, mini-skirted glamour girl with an extremely limited characterisation.

CARNABY STREET CRUSADERS?

The male members of the team also had their weaknesses as far as credibility was concerned. Quist was a little too relentless in his personal quest, slightly too infallible. Ridge was trendy, to say the least – indeed one reviewer referred to them all as the “Carnaby Street crusaders”! Fortunately, while these reservations need noting, the regular cast generally turned in polished, reliable performances – and certainly they rapidly gained popularity with the viewing public. Robert Powell predictably became the heart-throb of the show, while Simon Oates and John Paul appealed to the spirit of sympathy for the underdog common to any audience.

Some of the first season's scripts were undoubtedly superb, chilling television. Indeed they are widely – and quite properly – regarded as being the best of the entire *Doomwatch* run. The show started in fine style with *The Plastic Eaters*, which concerned Variant 14 – a top secret formula designed to destroy plastic waste. Unfortunately nobody realises its potential to destroy not just waste plastic but plastic of any kind – until it is too late. The Minister responsible for Variant 14 passes it to his secretary who then entrusts it to her air stewardess cousin. The plastic of the aeroplane melts – in flight – and all on board are killed. *Doomwatch* are called in.

In some ways the programme was a dynamic blend of earlier shows, incor-



Above: The Doomwatch team try to crack a collective smile in a break during *Without the Bomb*.

porating elements of *The Trouble Shooters*, *The Power Game*, *Doctor Who* and *The Avengers*. The direction was geared towards pace, there was plenty of location filming, and, perhaps most significant in the attention it attracted, an extremely high degree of horror. As Davis said, “The honeymoon of science is over. We’ve grown up – and we’re frightened.”

This fear was certainly a pervasive element of the first series: in one episode, *Tomorrow the Rat*, a race of super-killer rats plagues London. The researcher responsible for them was shown on screen after the rats had finished with her – an unpleasant, some said unnecessary, sight. Naturally, if predictably, the rats take to the sewers – traditionally a frightening, repulsive place. *Doomwatch* save the day – but, as usual, only just.

The fear element was substantially affected by the feeling that much of what was being screened could/would happen, or indeed had actually already done so. The series dealt with very topical issues such as test tube babies – taken

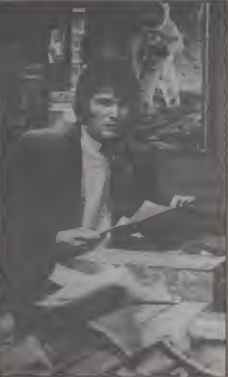
for granted now, but a dangerously unexplored issue at the time. The implications of genetic engineering, toxic waste disposal, computer observation and indoctrination were all subjects too close for comfort to a public who tuned in to an episode, then likely as not read a parallel story in their newspapers within a few months. It was Kit Pedler's proud boast that more often than not *Doomwatch* hit the scientific bullseye of accurate prophecy. In the first series, even as *The Plastic Eaters* was broadcast, a research team at Aston University was claiming to have discovered an additive to reduce plastic to powder if left in open sunlight. The episode *Project Sahara* dealt with computer observation of the private lives of the country's citizens – something which still causes concern today.

REAL-LIFE CONCERNS

One of the other ‘frightening’ episodes, *Burial At Sea* featured a group of playboy pop stars found dead in a liner drifting near to a secret dumping ground for surplus chemical warfare products. It is discovered that two of them have died from the effects of a defoliant which should have been safe in canisters on the sea bed. Dumping of massive quantities of potentially lethal chemical waste in the sea is still taking place. It is because of these real-life parallels that Pedler so much wanted a real *Doomwatch* to be established, ‘investigating on behalf of the people’. While that never happened during the course of the run, people in power listened to what the series had to say. Occasionally questions were even asked in Parliament about it.

For all its factual and prophetic basis, *Doomwatch* was still largely a science fiction drama series which, although made in a very realistic style, could be watched without the message spoiling the entertainment. The viewer's sympathies were always on the team's side – Quist, for all his dramatic faults, was always the incorruptible, refusing to be perverted by the influences of big business or politics, although his susceptibility towards bribery was explored in the tedious third episode *High Mountain*. ▶

Opposite page: *Rat Attack!* Tobias Wren (Robert Powell) and friends in *Tomorrow the Rat*. Below: Wendy Hall as Pat Hunnisett. Right: Stephen Franklin (Barry Stokes) looks concerned in *By the Pricking of my Thumbs*.





Left: John Paul relaxes between scenes on the washed-out set of *The Killer Dolphins*. Below: Dr Anne Tarrant (Elizabeth Weaver) seems to be on the spot in this scene from *Fire and Brimstone*.

The first season had been a huge success with public and press, and before it had finished its initial 13 episodes the BBC commissioned a second season. The last episode of that first season remains vivid in many people's memories to this day. The 'heart-throb' Toby Wren (Robert Powell) was killed off trying to defuse a nuclear device. It was a spectacularly tragic way in which to write him out and gave enormous impact to the series. The death scene generated a wave of reaction from press and public to emphasise the vulnerability and credibility of the *Doomwatch* team.

GRADUAL DECLINE

So successful had the first season been that another was on BBC1 screens by December of the same year – a mammoth task for Pedler, Davis and Dudley. As if in recognition of the impact *Survival Code* had attracted, the first episode dealt almost exclusively with the repercussions of Wren's death, and particularly its effect on Quist who faces blame from all sides. *You Killed Toby Wren* was sadly marred, however, by a trait which was to diminish the effect of the series from now on: it was too slow. There seemed to be an awful lot of discussion – a lot of waffle about the situation – and not enough action. For a programme which relied considerably on its shock value, this was a mistake.

Wendy Hall had declined to take part in the second season, despite an episode which concentrated on the efforts to save her life after she has taken a give-away sweet (*The Devil's Sweets*) – even in this episode she was given little to do except look rather stupid. A replacement was deemed necessary and the fourth episode, *No Room For Error* introduced attractive Jean Trend as Dr Fay Chantry. Fay was an improvement on Pat Hunnisett but she still didn't get enough to do, especially with the advent

of two (forgettable) additional regulars in the form of John Nolan as Geoff Hardcastle and Vivien Sherrard as Barbara Mason.

Overall the second season was a disappointing anti-climax compared with the first. All the same its best episodes were still frightening, authentic and talked about. The second episode, *Invasion*, was relatively effective as two boys vanish while exploring some caves beneath a sinister mansion – a building which is discovered to contain deadly chemical weapons. One of this season's best episodes was *In The Dark* with guest star Patrick Troughton turning in a first-rate performance and the leaking mustard gas from the ship providing a horribly believable scenario for the story. Unfortunately episodes like these and *The Iron Doctor* – which looked at a hospital ward run entirely by a computer – were more than offset by routine, dull stories with too much talk and too little action. *No Room For Error*, *By the Pricking of my Thumbs* and *The Human Time Bomb* had far too much padding to sustain their length. Another episode, *The Web of Fear*, which seemed all right on paper, finished up looking ridiculous and even comic. It concerned an outbreak of yellow fever in the Scilly Isles – carried by spiders and their webs. Special effects proved to be one of its failings (as in *Tomorrow the Rat*) but overall the plot was simply silly and the final impression one of boredom.

New writers and directors were tried out for the show, with Robert Holmes supplying one of the best second-season scripts, *The Inquest*, which dealt with an unexplained outbreak of rabies. On the basis of its strong first season, the series also attracted a number of star guests, including Bernard Hepton, Sally Thomsett, Simon Lack, Glyn Houston and Stephanie Bidmead. Unfortunately it failed to recapture the atmosphere of the first season, with Quist 'hopping

around like a neurotic hen' and Ridge behaving like a 'big-headed pop star'. The stories overall just weren't strong enough and the series tailed off with a weak final episode, *Public Enemy*, which again consisted of much talk about nothing. The show was still a ratings success, however, and the BBC believed there was further mileage to be exploited from it. Thus a third season went into production.

At this stage the series needed either a strong injection of new talent or a radically new, original approach to succeed. What it ended up with was an even more inferior derivative of its final year and, finally, its own cancellation. Further cast changes did not lend stability, with all the second season's additions departing and Simon Oates deciding he would appear in only a handful of the new episodes. Elizabeth Weaver was brought in as Dr Anne Tarrant – a very obvious replacement for Fay Chantry, and John Bown joined the cast as Commander Neil Stafford. The Minister – a character originally played by Hamilton Dyce – was now to be seen in every episode, played by Reginald Perrin's boss, John Barron, who had been in one episode of the second season. The continual presence of the Minister proved an unwelcome format restriction which should never have been made.

This series was plagued with trouble from the start. The opening episode *Fire and Brimstone*, was written by producer Dudley and designed to concentrate on the effect the pressures of *Doomwatch* are having on Ridge. Pedler and Davis were increasingly dismayed with this series as it veered further from their original conception. Pedler told reporters that *Fire and Brimstone* was "absolutely awful" and that it owed far more to *Z Cars* than it did to the first concept of *Doomwatch*. He added that he wanted nothing further to do with the series and demanded that his name be removed from the credits. Pedler was a serious loss – he could have been the saving figure to arrest the downward path – and the series never recovered from his departure.

CREDIBILITY GAP

If some episodes of the second season had devoted too much time to static conversation fillers, then in third series almost every episode was smothered with the same worthless padding. The third episode, *Say Knife Fat Man*, was an insufferably trendy exercise in the strength of student feeling, dealing as it did with a group of young activists holding a plutonium base to a kind of ransom. It was incoherent, extremely obvious as far as its message went, and very static. The episodes veered from science fiction into fantasy and consequently lost credibility – stories like *Hair Trigger*, *Deadly Dangerous Tomorrow* and especially *Flood* were all ideas that had either been explored in earlier episodes of the show, or were tried and

tested tv formula that didn't need rehashing for *Doomwatch*.

Another feature of the third season was that more time was devoted to the characterisation of the regulars, especially Quist and (when he appears) Ridge, but at the expense of the story. *Cause of Death* is one of the slowest in the whole series. Not surprisingly, audience figures were on the decline. Because of production delays, *Doomwatch* was broadcast through the summer of 1972 – hardly a peak viewing period. Although originally intended to last to the end of August, the show ended prematurely. Ironically this was because the BBC deemed the episode *Sex and Violence* unsuitable for broadcasting, whereas all the shows in the first and second seasons had escaped uncensored.

Sex and Violence was banned, not because either sex or violence featured prominently, but because it utilised real film footage of a military execution. The story, such as it was, concerned a debate over the levels of both sex and violence prevalent in society, and film footage was used to show examples of both. The film editor on the programme thought the use of such distressing – and real – material was irresponsible, and that the film could cause a great deal of offence to certain people. His point was taken and the episode was withdrawn, never to be seen on broadcast television. In retrospect, it was also very boring, consisting almost entirely of a dramatised discussion – a long way from *Doomwatch*'s original roots.

Doomwatch vanished from the screens on August 14, 1972, never to return – the BBC didn't bother even to repeat any of the earlier classic episodes, a shame since it has since destroyed the vast majority of them, probably because the series was never sold abroad and so, the BBC would argue, there was little point in keeping it. The first episode, however does survive along with, strangely enough, *Sex and Violence*.

At its peak *Doomwatch* was sf television of the very best quality, easily ranking alongside the other famous shows in the same category produced by BBC and ITV. It could be thoughtful, exciting, dramatic, and, perhaps best of all, it had, to start with, a firm scientific grounding which lent it a credibility and gave it a respectability not common to science fiction. It was very much a show of its time, contemporary in its discussion of issues, especially ecology, and thus still more effective – even if occasionally it could irritate with its trendy social conscience message.

Generally extremely well made, well acted and occasionally well written, it is a loss to television, in spite of its faults. Its decline can easily be forgiven when the first, and parts of the second, seasons are held up in comparison, and even at its worst, it still surpasses some of the other sf genre shows seen before and since. ■



With Doctor Who once again gracing Britain's TV screens, in a new 45 minute time slot, Gary Russell gives us the facts behind the 22nd Season.

DOCTOR WHO

Exactly how the new Doctor will shape up over the next six stories will make interesting viewing, switching quickly from the manic colourful eccentric to the calm orator with an acid-coating tongue. From a gentle assuring figure to a lout who can deliver as good a thump as he gets, the sixth Doctor deserves to win himself a massive following both in Britain and abroad over the next few years whilst Colin Baker portrays the character.

Nicola Bryant as the Doctor's companion Peri, on the other hand, is somewhat more familiar to viewers. She survived three escapades with the Doctor and was there at the crucial time of change after the Spectrox Tomaemia had taken its toll, at the end of *The Caves of Androzani*, on the fifth Doctor, played for the last time by Peter Davison.

As well as Nicola Bryant, Colin Baker will be joined by Anthony Ainley again playing the part of the hugely popular Master, last seen writhing in pain after being consumed by the flames of numismaton gas in *Planet of Fire*.

After the plethora of guest actors last year, it seems the procedure has been kept up with this year's array: Kate O'Mara, Jacqueline Pearce, Maurice Colbourne, Brian Glover, Stephen Yardley, Martin Jarvis, John Stratton, Sarah Greene, are just a few. Other names that crop up include Faith Brown, Sheila Reid, Forbes Collins, Fraser Hines, Terence Alexander, Sarah Berger, James Saxon, Michael Kilgarriff and of course, Patrick Troughton, returning to his role for one story as the second incarnation of the Doctor.

Attack of the Cybermen starts off the twenty second season of *Doctor Who* with a script by a writer new to the series Paula Moore – although a swift peek at the dedication page in Eric Seward's novel *The Visitation* may indicated a connection of sorts. The story is directed by Matthew Robinson and features a return of the CyberController, the dome-headed leader last seen tottering away from the icy tombs of Telos in *Tomb of the Cybermen* (1967).

Vengeance on Varos is the second story of the season, written by Philip Martin and directed by Ron Jones. This one is set on the planet Varos and introduces a particularly nasty piece of work called Sil, a grub-like fellow who sits stuffing his face with slime and squeaking angrily at all who disagree with him. Watch out in this story also for Martin Jarvis as the Governor and Forbes Collins as his less than loyal Chief.

The third story is Pip and Jane Baker's



A selection of scenes from the latest season of Doctor Who, featuring Colin Baker as the Doctor (outside his TARDIS).



Mark of the Rani which sees the Master teamed up with an evil female Time Lord played by Kate O'Mara.

The longest of the season, is *The Two Doctors*, written by Robert Holmes and directed by Peter Moffatt. It reintroduces us all to the second Doctor and his travelling companion for many years, Jamie McCrimmon, again played by Fraser Hines. This story also reintroduces us to the Sontarans, the evil war-



mongers who Holmes created in 1974 for *The Time Warrior*. Whilst the idea that Sontarans are identical clones appears to have been phased out, they are still the ever-military, but ever-honourable, creatures of before, here played by Clynton Greyn and Tim Raynham. The story was filmed on location in Seville in Spain, and is also set on a deep space research station.

The fifth story is by newcomer Glen

DO-THE NEW SEASON



McCoy and is directed by Pennant Roberts—and is called *Time-Lash*, set on the planet Kelfer. The final story of the season, *Revelation of the Daleks*, directed by Graeme Harper and written by script editor Eric Saward features the return of Davros and the Daleks, clearly seeking revenge after their defeat last time.

Possibly the most important aspect of this new season has been the revised

format for home broadcasting: it is now going out in 45 minute segments as opposed to the usual 25 minute parts. This means plots can unfold without needing that tedious and frequently clichéd 'cliff hanger' every 23 minutes that often broke more tension and drama than it created. Ironically, viewers abroad will still see it in 25 minute slots, which means there will be no 'hook' at the end of an episode to grab the atten-

tion and encourage them to watch next week.

The season runs as a series of two parter, and one three parter (*The Two Doctors*) and will be on the air a total of thirteen weeks. Produced once more by John Nathan-Turner, supplemented by script editor Eric Saward, this year's *Doctor Who* really does look as if it will be the most enjoyable and entertaining for years.

TRIPODS



An Interview with Producer Richard Bates by Richard Marson



The BBC's major new science fiction serial, *The Tripods*, has now completed its first thirteen week run. Regular viewers of the show will have realised by now that the saga is still far from concluded. Another series is to appear next year with a further one slated for the year after that.

Producer of the show is the genial Richard Bates, who I met in his office at the BBC just as production was beginning on the second series. Bates is a man with enormous television experience going back over twenty years. "Originally I had wanted to be a writer," he told me, "but realising rather painfully that I wasn't very good, became a script editor on the Honor Blackman *Avengers*. I had to invent adventure stories that could be shot entirely in the studio, virtually live, including lots of fights, characters and sets. I think I learnt everything I know from those 18 months on *The Avengers*."

Bates then graduated to becoming a 'serious drama' producer, working for all the ITV companies in turn, on shows like ABC's *Public Eye*, LWT's *Helen - A Woman of Today* and more recently *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* for STV. How then, had he become involved in the *Tripods* trilogy? "Somebody gave me the first book, about fifteen years ago, and as the others followed I just fell in love with them. I met the author, John Christopher, and we talked about adapting it for television. I said then that I'd love to do it but realised that, in those days, it would have to have been made entirely on film and at great expense. Over the subsequent years I had to suffer the agony of watching other people option the books, only to drop them again.

"A lot of people did try to make the books into television but up until *Star Wars* science fiction was really a bit of a dirty word in the industry. There was very little of it and it was rather looked on as children's material. Then in 1976 I picked up a copy of the trade journal *Variety* which carried a report saying that some one called George Lucas was going to make a science fiction film costing X million pounds and called *Star Wars*. I thought at once that if this came off it could be the beginning of a science fiction vogue. It all goes in cycles you see - ten years ago westerns were still popular, whereas now they're completely out of favour.

"Acting on this hope, I phoned John Christopher to say I was finally going to try and set *Tripods* up, and so I did a deal with him to start taking it around to show various people. I have to tell you that it was subsequently rejected by every single ITV company as well as the BBC. Then about three years ago, the Corporation got a new head of drama series and serials who I knew to be a *Tripods* fan. I came to him and said 'I love *Tripods*. You love *Tripods*. You're in a position to do it - so let's do it!' He took it to the programme heads and we finally got the go ahead."

One difficulty Bates had to overcome, early on in the proceedings, was to convince the BBC's senior management that a commitment to make all three series was necessary.



Opposite page: The three young heroes of *Tripods*, Jim Baker as Henry Parker (far left), Ceri Seel as Beanpole and John Shackley as Will Parker. Above: An entrant for the three-legged race. Below: Jeremy Young as the Count.



"I explained it all very clearly to them. I pointed out that without a second and a third series to follow on, they would look damn silly. I had to accept, for my part, that if the series was a disaster there wouldn't be much point in carrying it on."

Obviously the show was going to be a costly affair. "But not in the usual way. Our above the line cash is not particularly high because the casts are small and there aren't a lot of expensive stars to pay for. On the other hand, the below the line costs are quite considerable. *Tripods* takes up a lot of resources, with an extremely large crew and we have also to pay for a lot more editing and effects time than is usual. Series one took six months to edit, for instance. The BBC is such a huge organisation that many of our crew had never even met before, let alone worked with each other."

It was quickly decided that the entire series would be shot on video. I asked Richard the reason for this. "I've always worked all on video - going right back to *Public Eye* which we made on ABC's Outside Broadcast units, usually used only for sports coverage. It's not that I don't like film, it's just that I don't like the mix between film and video. In my view it's a ▶



TRIPODS

visual piece of nonsense. I've always championed video as the medium of the future and now it's becoming like a whole new technology. TV just hasn't been able to treat video in as advanced a manner as film up to now because it's not so adaptable. Everyone knows about the blue halo you used to see around the newscasters. Up until two years ago you could always see the join – in *Tripods* you can't, although video effects are still a long and laborious process. Most of the series is made on location so the *Tripods* themselves are shot against a blue background and superimposed over the exterior footage.

"We recently had a look at the old Alexander Korda film, *Things To Come*, and the effects were still amazing. It's fifty years old and here we are looking at it for hints on our 1985 modelwork! The BBC have actually welcomed *Tripods* as an opportunity to extend their knowledge of video techniques and to challenge their own staff to come up with more and more sophisticated effects. It's been breaking a lot of barriers. Effects wise, the BBC is better than ITV – and I don't mean

that as a criticism of the Independent companies because they haven't over the years been so interested in making shows like *Doctor Who* and *Blake's Seven*. That said, what we're doing now will probably look like paltry child's play in twenty years' time and I think we're going to have to be very careful as techniques get more advanced not to allow our effects to swamp either the actors, or indeed the plot.

"Film does have some advantages over video. For instance we can't have proper slow motion with tape. With film you can double the speed to 50 frames a second, projecting it at normal speed so that you get half speed motion with perfect picture quality. Video cannot record more than 25 frames a second and although you can slow it down, the picture judders."

Tripods as a production could not get underway until the three main characters had been cast: "I think my directors would agree that it was actually the hardest three days we spent on the series. We saw 350 boys in that time, after having advertised in the trade papers for young men of the right age, build and height. Out of that we found Jim Baker, who plays Henry and Ceri Seel who is Beanpole. We didn't, however, find a Will. We searched long and hard for him, 'phoning theatre groups up and down the country until John Shackley turned up at the Liverpool Everyman Theatre."

The children in the series are, in fact, older than those in the book – a decision made for practical reasons. "The problem with employing young people is that until they are sixteen and beyond school leaving age they can't work adult hours. I knew that they needed to be able to if we were to make the series on an economical schedule. Also the older the actor the more experienced they tend to be. Unfortunately though, kids today tend to look older even if they are sixteen."

I asked Bates about the process of adapting the books: "The first series was adapted by Alick Rowe, the second by Christopher Penfold and the third will again be Alick. We knew that in order to give the BBC the magic number of thirteen episodes we would have to invent some new material so I discussed various ideas with John Christopher and together we prepared a thirteen storyline shape to give to Alick. He then did the first draft, John saw them again to make comments and suggestions and, along with my additions or cuts, they were then written up in their final form. John has approval of the series throughout and the process was the same for series Two as it will be when we come to do series Three. For anyone who's interested the changes from book to TV are quite easy to spot if you either have the books already or if you go out and buy them."

What about Bates' choice of directors for the first season? "Right from the start I

actively didn't want *Tripods* to have a traditional television style to it. With great respect to my colleagues who work on *Doctor Who*, they have adopted a highly recognisable feel. I wanted something more sophisticated than that so I searched long and hard for two directors who I felt would believe me when I said 'use your imagination, treat it like a movie and imagine that you've got a lot of money to spend – although actually you haven't' – and then we can see how far back we have to pull from your original ideas. This policy worked overall very well, though we did have a lot of wild ideas that had to be dropped. Series One had in the end two totally different directors. The first eight were directed by Graham Theakston, who is a young man with very little television experience but who was an architect by training with a strong visual imagination. He was very outspoken and absolutely ruthless about getting what he wanted. He saw the opportunity being given to him and he leapt at it.

"My other director, Christopher Barry, is an old hand, a *Doctor Who* veteran and with a massive list of BBC credits. He is a wonderful organiser, cool, calm and collected, planning everything to the nth degree. He too was learning, pushing up his knowledge. They're both very different men but their work complemented beautifully. Christopher is back on the second series, for the first seven and after that I've got a man called Bob Blagden to do the six episodes inside the *Tripods'* city. Bob is a BBC graphics man, with a great imagination and extremely skilled in effects work. He's new to drama having done a lot of magazine shows and some children's television, and he virtually kicked my door down to get involved – as did Graham. I'm pleased with them all: after all a producer is only as good as his directors."

Bates says the making of the first series was "a fair old nightmare."

"We were out on location in 1983 for a total of twelve weeks and apart from two spent at Silkwood Castle, standing in for a French chateau, I don't think we were in any other single location for more than a day. It gave us enormous logistical problems and with a new location every day we all got to know the hotels of England and Wales pretty well!

"When we were in Wales, shooting in this forest, Jim Baker slipped in some of the undergrowth and – so we thought – pulled a few ligaments in his ankle. It then turned out that he'd actually injured the cartilage in his knee and he'd have to rest for a couple of days. There we were with one of our three leads, who are never off screen, unavailable. That evening we discovered we couldn't get a stunt double because it was so far away. Then the director, Christopher Barry came to me with a young lady who was working in the hotel's kitchens. He said 'who does this remind you of?' and, while I couldn't say in front of her, it was true that she bore an astonishing resemblance to Jim. I rescheduled so that we could get through the next two days without any dialogue for Jim's character and we



Opposite page: Jeremy Young, with Charlotte Long as Eloise and Pamela Salem as the French Countess. Above: Will and Henry are caught by Rowley, played by John Michael McCarthy. Below: The Imprisoned Henry Parker.

asked this girl if she would act for us. To our utter astonishment she agreed, so we put a wig on her along with Jim's costume and she did the work! There's a sequence in one of the finished episodes where there are 18 shots of this girl and even now I forget which ones they were. She looked like him, walked like him and ran like him. When ever we go back there we always say hello – she saved us a lot of time and money!"



The striking theme and incidental music to the series is the result of Bates' championship of a commercial jingles' writer, Ken Freeman. "He hadn't done anything for mainstream television. I saw a commercial he'd done some time back for BMW cars with all these obsolete cars buried up to their noses in the ground, accompanied by this eerie, strange score. When we got the series started I tracked Ken down and he did it all, by himself, at home – a couple of miles from where I live. Every single bar of music is a one off, there's not a single piece of repeated music in thirteen episodes. Ken knows that I'll wring his neck if he doesn't do series Two and Three!"

The scheduling of *Tripods* was very deliberate. "We're going out in *Doctor Who's* old slot, designed for a family audience. I think *Tripods* appeals to children of all ages. I hope it's frightening but in the right way. I can remember my children hiding from the Daleks, and I want to capture that kind of 'thrill down the spine' feeling in *Tripods*. I'm not a science fiction buff and I don't consider *Tripods* to be pure science fiction. John Christopher himself describes it as a wonderful, traditional adventure and I agree. He's taken three boys that are at an age that everybody can identify with and given them a fantasy we all indulge in – rebellion, saving the world and generally going out there and doing something interesting."

For the second series of *Tripods*, Bates and his team are taking their cameras abroad to Switzerland to tape some of the White Mountain scenes. With production so intense, the series should be on the line for a return next autumn and then again in 1986.

Richard Bates is understandably pleased with work on *Tripods* so far, and with public reaction favourable, heavy foreign sales and more to come he can only be proud that the television baby he nursed so long ago has finally grown up. ■

ADAM ADAMANT lives again!

Feature by Jeremy Bentham

A whip lashes out. The cold leather flails cruelly around the hero's wrist, twisting the swordstick from his grasp. At once the two thugs are upon him, fists flying. For a brief moment the dapperly dressed victim appears to be beaten. Then he spies the bound and struggling form of his teenage companion, and the look of fierce determination returns. He dodges his attackers and reaches for his cane. Cold steel flashes from the scabbard and in an instant the whip-wielding hood is dispatched. The second thug mounts a determined assault with a kendo staff, but is no match for his bold opponent, who lifts the villain from his feet and tosses him through the window to meet his fate two floors down...

Such mastery of the art of fisticuffs is remarkable by any standards, yet more so when one considers our hero is no less than 99 years of age. A man from the past. A stranger in a strange land. Adam Adamant.

For nearly a year, the fifty minute adventures of Adam Adamant, his unwelcome admirer/assistant Georgina Jones, and the poetically inspired butler-cum-valet William E. Simms delighted many with their peculiar brand of action, romance, science-fiction and comedy. All tinged with just a hint of satire on the values and contrasts between England 1902 and England 1966.

After two seasons the BBC cancelled the series despite continuing good ratings. Yet in this time, *Adam Adamant Lives* came very close to toppling the crown of *The Avengers*. Ironically, had it done so, it would have been very much like fratricide, for both programmes shared the same Godfather – Canadian born Sydney Newman, famous now as the creator of *Doctor Who*.

Newman wanted to acquire, for the BBC, the rights to the Sexton Blake detective novels – a very popular series of books set in the period between the two world wars. Sexton Blake was a kind of updated Sherlock Holmes, an independently wealthy adven-



Above: En Garde! Gerald Harper as the super suave and quintessentially Victorian Adam Adamant.



turer, scholar and athlete, who battled against fiendish criminal masterminds and dastardly villains with the help of his Cockney boy companion, Tinker. But Newman was foiled by ITV, who acquired the rights first, putting the series out as a children's programme with Laurence Payne in the title role.

A MAN OUT OF TIME

However, the notion of doing a Sexton Blake-styled series remained, and since he knew that Verity Lambert, the producer of *Doctor Who* was leaving that show, Newman called her into his office and explained what he had in mind. He visualised a gentleman adventurer of impeccable background and character, who would somehow be brought forward in time to London 1966. Here he would carry on his fight against crime, but amid modern society.

Parallels between their hero and *The Avengers'* John Steed were inevitable, but there was one major difference. Steed blended in perfectly no matter what the setting: in *The Avengers* he wore a hunting jacket, jodhpurs, a bowler hat and talked with an Etonian accent, without anyone taking a bit of notice. Newman's character, by contrast, stood out

like a sore thumb. Modern-day criminal cartels were so astonished by Adamant's appearance and mannerisms, they regarded him as a joke, until he outwitted them.

To emphasise differences in attitudes between past and present, the hero had a young companion in 1966, to explain concepts outside his experience. This showed how absurd modern language and attitudes seemed to a Victorian, and vice versa. Here Newman drew again on Sexton Blake, but rather than introduce a boy companion, he chose instead a girl in her late teens. And while this may have allowed the writers to create some romantic interest between the two principals, the programmes eventual style and appeal owed more to romantic restraint than indulgence.

The pilot episode, written by Tony Williamson (who later became the show's script consultant), set the scene and tone for the rest of the series, and established Adam Adamant's character. At the height of his fame, Adamant was the ideal Victorian gentleman; of good breeding, honourable, charming and chivalrous. A keen sportsman, boxing and fencing were among his favourite pastimes. Steadfast in his loyalty to king and country, it seemed only fitting he should dedicate his skills to the routing of evil and

the preservation of his society.

Although only one woman, Louise, ever won his heart, he refused to marry lest it endanger her life and be used as a weapon against him. And in those years of crisis his resolve had to be especially firm. The insurrections in India, the Franco-Prussian War, even the Crimea... Adamant suspected one mind to be behind them all – a mind of supreme evil.

The title role was played by Gerald Harper, a RADA graduate whose career before the series began involved a variety of acting styles: Shakespeare at the Old Vic Theatre, musicals with Cliff Richard, modern and period dramas on stage and television.

A SWITCH IN TIME

The first episode pitted Adamant against his deadliest foe, the Face, played by Peter Ducrow, whose features were concealed behind a black, leather mask. The Face held the secret of suspended animation and, with the aid of the duplicitous Louise, he finally lured Adamant to a living death. Adamant's last memory of 1902 was the hand of his arch enemy being kissed by Louise.

Above: The almost impeturbable Adamant questions a couple of exotic suspects in *The Basardi Affair*.



► Sixty-four years elapsed before workmen found the body of a man entombed in a block of solid ice. During this time, the name of Adam Adamant, "gentleman adventurer", had become legend.

Unbelievably, Adamant awoke from his state of deep freeze, with both body and mind unaffected by the passing of so many years. But all his will and resolve could not prepare him for the sights that met his eyes on leaving the hospital. Flashing signboards, jams of roaring traffic, women in mini-skirts, blaring transistor radios, sex cinemas – all around him the incessant noise of a modern city. The strain was too much...

Thankfully his second taste of oblivion was much shorter than the first, and he came to some hours later, in the flat of his rescuer. The trousers, T-shirt and cap suggested a boy, but Adam was horrified when the cap was pulled off, revealing long, blonde hair. The girl turned out to be Georgina Jones, played by Juliet Harmer.

A wide-eyed Mod, Georgina, with her catch-word "Zoink", was Adam Adamant's greatest admirer, adoring the stories her grandfather used to tell about him before his rediscovery. After his rejuvenation she quickly came to love Adamant, always hoping she could persuade him to take her

seriously despite his constant assertions that she was too impetuous and too naive. At the back of her mind she knew why he would not return her affections. The scar of his betrayal by Louise was unremoveable.

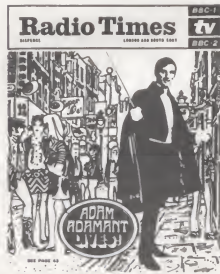
Brandishing his swordstick, and still dressed in the manner of a bygone age, Adamant stepped forth to lend his services again to his

country. With his fortune intact (and presumably bolstered by sixty-four years of compound interest) he bought premises in central London. A concealed doorway in an underground car park gave access to his private lift, which whisked him up to his penthouse overlooking the River Thames. Using antique dealers, he furnished his house to his own tastes, and his shirts continued to be handmade in the Burlington Arcade. His only concession to the world of 1966 was a small car – a British made Mini Cooper S, with the appropriate registration number "AA 1000".

No gentleman should be without a gentleman's gentleman, and in the second story, "Death Has A Thousand Faces...", Adamant engaged the services of a most unusual butler – the redoubtable W.E. Simms. A former music-hall artiste and self-acknowledged Jack-of-all-trades, Simms, played with great timing by actor Jack May, proved not only to be a worthy valet, but also an excruciatingly bad poet!

INVENTIVE STORYLINES

Armed with the loyal backup of Simms, but handicapped by the attentions of Miss Jones, Adamant returned to his quest against evil.



Top: Shades of Sherlock! Adamant ala noir in *The Terribly Happy Embalmers*. **Right:** The ultimate generation gap. A youthful looking 99-year-old Adamant and his teenage companion Georgina Jones.

His forays against the underworld were always successful, but often for the most unpredictable reasons. For example, in Robert Banks Stewart's story "The Sweet Smell of Disaster", Adamant was drawn to investigate the marketing division of B.K. Soap Manufacturers, mistakenly believing it to be a group of revolutionary conspirators. Only when he became inadvertently involved did he discover that the B.K. Group was, after all, an insidious body, planning to addict Britain on a scented drug given away as plastic flowers with the soap powder. Once Britain was 'hooked' the managers of B.K. would seize the reigns of power.

"The Sweet Smell of Disaster" was a very typical Adamant story; taking an element of modern life, developing it to outrageous lengths, adding a sinister sub-plot, and opposing it with the Victorian righteousness of Adam Adamant. Attracted by this format many writers groomed on *The Avengers* produced stories for the series. Among them was *Avengers* mastermind, Brian Clemens. Quoted in *Radio Times* Verity Lambert said, "Writers must not only have an inventive

plot but be able to get outside and look at it objectively, then show it through a Victorian's eyes, which calls for a good deal of specialised knowledge." Also making a name for himself as a BBC Staff Director on this show was a young man later destined for stardom behind the cameras – Ridley Scott.

Season two, commissioned rapidly in response to the ratings success of the first series, adopted a few format modifications, and *The Face* was re-introduced.

Also preserving his body against the ravages of time *The Face* awakened in 1966, having been protected all those years by his consort, Louise, who had become an old woman. When *The Face* adopted a new consort, rewarding the patience of Louise with a flask of poison, Adamant vowed revenge – and their battle started anew.

The new season brought a crop of even more eccentric plots, many of them the inventions of *The Face*. "Tunnel of Death", for instance, showed him manipulating the minds of prominent women using brain-washing equipment installed in a fashionable hair salon's hair dryers.

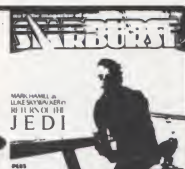
CREATIVE CLASH

Audience reactions were good, but at the BBC, series creator Sydney Newman was unhappy with his product. It was doing well, he agreed, but not that well. The problem, he felt, lay with Gerald Harper. As Adamant, Harper played the role with a zealous gleam in his eyes and an almost holier-than-thou tinge to his voice. Thus he was popular, but could not be sympathetic. In Newman's eyes the character needed to be sympathetic in the way that William Hartnell's *Doctor Who* had been. As it was Adamant was "too stuck up", and when Harper refused to soften his approach Newman finished the show after twenty-nine episodes.

The show had a set of re-runs but was never re-commissioned. However, in its way it paved a path for Jon Pertwee's *Doctor Who*, and, years later, it inspired the naming of the New Romantic rock band *Adam And The Ants*, and its lead singer Adam Ant.

Since then many of the episodes have been purged by the BBC Archives, yet memories of the series linger. ■





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Repo Man



Feature by Alan Jones

Destined for cultdom, *Repo Man* is the most off-the-wall film to have been shown on the festival circuit in a long while. The brainchild of 30 year old Alex Cox, it's a film that owns up to its many influences, like *The Evil Dead*, and brings them together in a distinctly individual way to fashion a true original.

Cox is English and was born and brought up in Merseyside. When he was a law student at Oxford he developed an interest in the university drama productions and subsequently studied film at Bristol University until the facility accidentally burnt down. Thinking there was more chance of him being able to obtain finance for film projects in America he moved there in 1977 and attended UCLA for three years. His first film was a forty-minute short called *Sleep is for Sissies* which was almost a dry run for *Repo Man* as it too dealt with the ultimate weirdness of Los Angeles. The L.A. Times was moved enough by the film to describe Cox as "A kiddie Nicolas Roeg". A couple of scriptwriting jobs followed after he left UCLA but, as is often the case, neither were filmed. One was for M.G.M. called *Out of Order Percy*, a World War One desertion saga, and the other was *The Happy Hour* about nuclear war. Cox then went into partnership with two other ex-UCLA students, Peter McCarthy and Jonathan Wacks which led to them producing his



script for *Repo Man*. Nine months later, ex-Monkee Mike Nesmith entered the picture and managed to squeeze a 1.5 million dollar negative pick up deal out of Universal Pictures. *Repo Man* was off and running.

Over here to promote his labour of love at the London Film Festival, Alex Cox is in reality very similar to the Emilio Estevez character, Otto, in *Repo Man*. He sleeps on the floor of his office in Los Angeles, describes himself as often self-centred and immature due to considering himself an eternal teenager and is a self-styled urban punk who just wants to make films and find true love. As a result, I warmed to him immediately as he regaled me with his perceptions on the making of his feature debut.

"In between scriptwriting I wasn't really a fully fledged repo man, more a contract driver. That is someone who gets 25 dollars for driving a car that has been repossessed back to the repo yard. Like Otto in the early stages of the film in fact. The film is based on actual events that have either happened to me or to other acquaintances. Sy Richardson, who plays Lite, the black repo man in the film, was also a real repo man in Chicago. He went to L.A. to become an actor thinking it was the easiest of the two options when people started shooting at him. Lee Ving, who is in the band Fear, who appear briefly on the soundtrack, was also a repo man and the film was a concoction of all the outlandish stories they would tell.

"It was definitely the science-fiction angle that sold the script. The hook originally was a car that either had an atomic bomb in the boot or some nuclear waste. This changed somewhat during the production to something more metaphysical. People tend to assume that they are aliens but there is little evidence in the movie to substantiate that. All there is is some daffy girl and a photo of two condoms wearing grass skirts with fish eyes. Fantastic things do happen in the movie but they are all rooted in reality and my perception of Los Angeles being this fantasy world where a whole bunch of people are working at cross purposes in a semi-

industrial wasteland. L.A. is exactly that as far as I'm aware.

"I like *Dark Star*. I'm glad the ending of *Repo Man* reminded you of that. It was pure wish fulfilment. Martin Turner, who took the stills on the movie, and Jonathan Wacks came up with the ending as an alternative to the very grim one I had planned where the atom bomb finally explodes destroying the city. It was intended as a brutal parody of the *Close Encounters* genre where cute little aliens arrive to save us from our sins. Ironically enough, even though the special effects are pretty hokey and have a Jack Arnold '50s quality about them, even intended as a parody of a different kind, audiences tend to get caught up in the ending and buy it rather than laugh at it. The shooting was on such a limited schedule that we never got more than two shots for the final sequence. We had

to reshoot inserts by juggling the footage we had and persuading actor Tracey Walter to leave the shooting of *Conan The Destroyer* to do another scene and persuade Emilio Estevez to get his hair cut again and repierce his ear. All this was so much of an effort to do that we probably approached it more with sincerity than the planned derision. Even when you are sarcastic you have to be sincere.

"*Repo Man* does confound expectations. There are a lot of loose ends combined with the undermining of the familiar. But the world of *Repo Man* is a world that is falling apart and one that doesn't allow for the building of strong relationships although each character wants one. The ironic cast of the movie means they won't get what they want. If Harry Dean Stanton truly wanted a sensible and loving relationship with the





Previous page and this spread: A selection of scenes from Alex Cox's *Repo Man*, featuring Martin Sheen's son (Emilio Estevez), Harry Dean Stanton and assorted weirdies.



Estevez character, he shouldn't abuse him so and likewise Olivia Barash as Leila. If she really wanted Otto, she shouldn't be the person to pump him full of electricity. Even in reality people are always working against their best interests out of desperation to attain the impossible.

"I originally budgeted *Repo Man* at \$100,000 and that would have been possible but it would have been without the participation of Emilio Estevez and Harry Dean Stanton. It would also have looked less slick. You know, a lot of the 1.5 million was wasted on producer's fees and the interest on the bank loan plus a whole lot of superfluous trucks and trailers. The bigger the crew, the more money involved, the more money gets wasted. It was nice to have, I suppose, but...

"Universal absolutely hate the movie.

There was a purge between the time they paid for it and the delivery date. Tom Mount and Bob Raimi who had okayed the project were, during production, deposed by a whole lot of shoe salesmen. They seemed offended by it, so much so that they became quite abusive about it when people rang up asking to see the movie. 'You don't want to see that piece of garbage', they would say. 'Watch *Streets of Fire* instead'. A struggle is not the word.

"I didn't purposely set out to make *Repo Man* a cult movie. But obviously it is going to appeal more to a minority audience. Not meaning to deprecate the general audience, but they do seem quite happy with pictures like *Indiana Jones* while I am horrified by them. If non-fascists are in the cult minority then I'm with them! I don't like the latest rash of mainstream movies very much as

they seem to be encouraging us to get ready for wars against indigenous Third World people. I don't want *Repo Man* to become a new *Rocky Horror*, but the attitude of the film is as clear cut as the differences between a band like Suicidal Tendencies and the Bee Gees, or Black Flag and Duran Duran. Black Flag don't set out to be only of minority interest but because they are so hardcore and uncompromising it means they aren't going to be as popular as a bunch of wimps with blow dried hair. Sincerity probably makes *Repo Man* appeal to the minorities more and had I been determined to make a ton of money, I would have made an entirely different film.

"Mike Nesmith turned out to have quite a good sense of humour. A bit old-fashioned perhaps, but then he is in his forties. He has been a millionaire twice and that must age you quite a bit. It was his idea to have the smoking boots in the opening of the film. From the very outset he said he didn't want any punk music in the film—he likes Jimmy Buffet—but that soon went by the boards. We had our fair share of arguments as anybody in this situation would but, hey, no one else would put the money up and I'm glad we ran into him. Even if he doesn't like the movie very much, I hope he's augmenting his vast fortune as a result. I think he would have liked to have been in it but he had a beard and that was one of the ground rules on *Repo Man*. No beards.

"It's nice that *Repo Man* has been so well received at all the festivals it's been invited to, but in retrospect it has been a real waste of time me attending as a lot has fallen apart because of it. I thought it would be a real trip but it hasn't, so I won't be doing it again. Now any film I do after the event can take care of itself. I trashed a lot of offers in L.A. to work on a motorcycle movie that just bit the dust. Not that I wanted to direct *Revenge of the Nerds* or *Annie 2* but at least I know now that I'm attracting attention. I've also had my pick of about a dozen scripts concerning preppy college boys who go to military school and learn how to become true men. If you want to make a film that doesn't celebrate American Nazism, you're in trouble. I want to celebrate American—and British—individualism and all the qualities that seemed so valuable once upon a time. Now everything is subsumed by this misguided patriotism that is going to lead us all to the grave.

"Fully-fledged sci-fi doesn't interest me much only as an allegory. Fantasy exists in its own little *Conan* world, but good sci-fi exists as an allegory for what is going on right now. That's why I've just optioned a book by Harry Harrison called 'Bill the Galactic Hero' which is a rigorous send-up of the military. It's *Star Wars* but seen from the perspective of a grunt as opposed to the bridge of the *Starship Enterprise*. Harrison was a machine gun instructor during World War Two and he trained thousands of men to kill. His perspective is terribly funny."

STARBURST FILM REVIEWS

DUNE

"A package of edited highlights with no substance".

*A Starburst Review
by John Brosnan*

Anyone who goes to see *Dune* and is unfamiliar with its literary background can be forgiven for assuming it is yet another rip-off of *Star Wars*. Ironical, really, considering that George Lucas cannily pillaged much of the cream from Frank Herbert's 1965 novel when he was assembling *Star Wars*, including the desert setting (Herbert's desert world of Arrakis became Tatooine; and in fact the Tatooine sequences in *Star Wars* more closely resemble the John Schoenherr illustrations for the *Dune* stories than the movie of *Dune* itself does), the corrupt inter-stellar Empire, the mystical overtones and various other elements (the Jedi ability to mentally dominate others by voice power is just one example). Lucas even featured a giant worm in *The Empire Strikes Back*...

What Lucas didn't take from *Dune* was its convoluted and complicated plot, and its po-faced seriousness. All that he left for poor David Lynch, writer and director of *Dune*, to contend with. Lynch's solution, and one suspects it was imposed upon him by the De Laurentiis gang, was to try and cram all the main plot points of the novel into a movie lasting only 2 hours and 16 minutes. The result is a film so packed with information that there's little time



left to devote to such things as narrative drive, drama or characterisation.

It takes almost an hour of screen time to even arrive at the world of *Dune* and after that so much happens so fast that Lynch has no time to properly evoke the true nature of the hostile desert environment. As a setting Arrakis is wasted really; in fact we see remarkably little of the desert in *Dune*, which is pretty funny when you come to think of it (like setting *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* on dry land). Lynch may have been faithful to the plot of the novel but along the way he lost what the novel was actually about. As someone remarked to me after the screening, the film serves as a kind of trailer to the novel: a package of edited highlights with no substance.

On the plus side many of the sets and costumes are impressive (though the

survival suits themselves are a bit bland compared to how they're described in the novel) and there's enough of Lynch's speciality – visual grotesquerie – in the film to keep you interested while the poor actors stand there telling each other what the plot's about.

But overall I was disappointed with *Dune*. Perhaps, in fairness, I should go and see it again to give it a second chance but I must admit the prospect doesn't appeal to me. Maybe in a couple of years...

Starring: Francesca Annis, Kyle MacLachlin, Sting, Jurgen Prochnow, Brad Dourif, Kenneth MacMillan, Max Von Sydow. Directed by David Lynch. Screenplay by David Lynch, based on the novel by Frank Herbert. Photography by Freddie Francis. Production Design by Anthony Masters. Produced by Raffaella De Laurentiis.

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▶ VIDEO FILE ◀

Reviews by Barry Forshaw

The biggest video event of recent months is the issue by CBS/FOX of *The Empire Strikes Back* (in a package that includes Peter Hyam's thriller *The Star Chamber* and Larry Stewart's horror movie with Vera Miles, *The Initiation*).

I'm sure that no reader of this magazine needs further commendation for the Lucas/Kershner galactic epic – suffice to say that the experience still works well on video even without imperial cruisers passing thunderously over one's head to the symphonic, stereophonic pounding of John Williams' score (obviously the effect of a cinema showing is more total.)

Still, the movie works very well on video – even the Yoda sequence seemed about the right length, although Frank Oz's Kermit-voice and the jerky puppet-like movements of Luke's Jedi Guru still seem out of place in a movie crammed with such staggering special effects. But this is a small quibble – delights abound, and this time round, it's interesting to pick up on things you may not have had time to appreciate on a first viewing (such as how breathtakingly good the sets are – it's remarkable how often during Lucas' trilogy the eye is ravished by first-rate art design) – and even the ramifications of the plot (now that we know everyone's relationship to everyone else) acquire a renewed interest. It's a shame that the dialogue (never Lucas' strong suit) remains as leaden as ever (one can see why Harrison Ford balked at saying some of his lines!) but few will find that a major flaw, and video dealers all over the country will no doubt be rubbing their hands at the prospect of healthy rentals.

WALKER ON THE WILD SIDE

The video industry has done well by the films of Pete Walker, one of Britain's most talented exploitation filmmakers. His best films are available on video (*House of Whipcord*, *Frightmare*) as well as several less interesting efforts such as *The Flesh And Blood Show*.

Warners have now re-issued *Schizo*, and it's unfortunate that, unlike its earlier video incarnation, the new version is cut (Warners, of course, having to prevent prosecutions in the new draconian moral climate). This makes for at least one curious moment – after a character has had a knitting needle driven through her skull, she begins to turn slowly towards the camera. Why? So we can see the special make-up effects of course – Walker always provides the requisite grand



ABOVE: "Stick with me kid and we'll find the force". Yoda and Luke (Mark Hamill) now in video (CBS/Fox). BELOW: Eye-popping stuff from Pete Walker's reissued *Schizo* (Warners).



HITS

1. Rear Window (CIC)
2. Savage Islands (CIC)
3. Lemora (Cinema Indoors)
4. Dead of Night (PMA)
5. Abominable Snowman (WFY)

PITS

1. Astro Zombies (MOV)
2. Cyborg 2087 (IINM)
3. A Name For Evil (VCD)
4. Warspeed (VDF)

guignol shivers. But not now, I'm afraid – and *Schizo* is one of his weaker movies anyway, even with the climaxes intact.

Despite the title, this isn't another slavish *Psycho* clone, but the plot will hold few surprises for *Starburst* readers, who've seen similar before. Lynne Fredericks gives a performance of quite staggering woodenness in a role that really needs flexibility, but Stephanie Beacham does well in support. Despite all this, *Schizo* still should be seen by Walker devotees.

The problem with Walker's long overdue return to horror cinema is that he's mined what is for him a new vein – the Gothic. Walker's best movies are very contemporary in their shudder-some goings-on – but in *The House of Long Shadows* (Guild) it's the paraphernalia of The Old Dark House that scuttles the director's customary vein of grisly inspiration. There's a fatal lack of indecision about what kind of a film this is – Vincent Price's thunder-accompanied entrance line suggests a camp send-up, but Michael Armstrong's screenplay doesn't move far enough in this direction. And the much vaunted quartet of ageing horror stars (Price, Christopher Lee, John Carradine and a shamefully wasted Peter Cushing) simply don't strike the expected sparks. Walker's Prima Diva, Sheila Keith, lends her usual marvelously sinister presence, and there are moments, but otherwise...

MUSCLE AND MAGIC

The current boom in movies featuring various muscular barbarians is largely inspired by the Milius/Schwarzenegger *Conan* – but this exotic strain is a late flowering of the *Sword and Sandal* Peplums of the sixties, most notably the Steve Reeves *Hercules* series and their umpteen derivatives.

Looking at these films today (and a good selection have been surfacing recently on video), the sole interest of most of them lies in the aesthetic pleasure you may take (or not, as the case may be) in the miraculously developed biceps and pectorals of Reeves and his legion of imitators. But there are one or two examples of this branch of Italian exploitation cinema that are definitely worth a look. Sergio Leone's *Colossus of Rhodes*, Jacques Tourneur's *Giant of Marathon* (neither, unfortunately, available on video) as well as the contributions made by Mario Bava (cinematography, special effects) to various movies (such as the Francisci/Reeves *Hercules* duo). And Bava directed one of the strangest in the cycle, *Hercules In The Centre Of*

The Earth, with Christopher Lee as a vampiric villain (which I've covered in an earlier *Starburst*).

Hercules in this movie was played by British bodybuilder Reg Park, and he was lucky enough to play the character in another stylishly directed film, *Cottafavi's Hercules Conquers Atlantis* (now issued by Videoform). This is, of course, the most respectable version, discussed at great length by such up-market critics as Raymond Durnat, Charles Barr and Christopher Fraying – in fact, it's the only Italian music movie to rise above coverage in specialist magazines. Does it live up to its reputation? Well – yes and no. There are moments of pure pulp poetry (excuse the alliteration!) – Hercules' fight with Proteus, who turns out to be an entire island, ends with a girl being detached from a rock she has "blended" into, and the bleeding of the rock (i.e. Proteus) is a moment worthy of Cocteau. There's much fluid and stylish camera movement, a witty treatment of Hercules' incurable laziness, and a lively final destruction of Atlantis. But it's still basically a prisoner of its genre – and if that doesn't worry you, it's worth your time.

WARPED FACTOR 2

I recently discussed a CIC video which included episodes banned by the BBC from their current *Star Trek* retrospective. CIC has another cassette featuring two more episodes which would cause untold corruption amongst the nation's tea-time viewers.

These episodes (clearly overdue for prosecution along with the films currently destroying the morals of *Starburst* readers) are *Whom The Gods Destroy* (directed by Herb Wallerstein) and *Plato's Stepchildren* (directed by David Alexander). The first is a slightly overplayed piece with Kirk and Spock at the mercy of the megalomaniac internee of a galactic insane asylum, and it's difficult to see why Auntie is worried about upsetting the more delicate among its viewers, but with *Plato's Stepchildren*, it's easy to discern which scene has them worried. Under the mental influence of a malign alien, Kirk is obliged to kiss the delectable Lt. Uhura, clad in a gown with a teasingly plunging neckline (Uhura, that is). This has the effect of creating visible erotic excitement in a watching female alien (well it would, wouldn't it?), and no doubt the Beeb feel that this scene would, as they put it, "give cause for concern". Dare one suggest that the inter-racial nature of the kiss might be a factor? If so, the BBC is woefully craven – it's bad enough that they're so concerned with the easily troubled sensibilities of our moral guardian's without worrying about the nation's racists as well. Still, maybe I'm being unjust – it's probably the threat of a little mild torture that caused the ban – rent the video and judge for yourself.

RARE SPECIES

Coming into the category of "interesting videos you might miss if you blink" is Alan Rudolph's *Endangered Species* (MGM), a thriller I can't really tell you anything about for fear of spoiling the carefully constructed plot – suffice it to say that it's worth your while, particularly in terms of its solidly crafted characters (still a rarity in genre films).

MONKEY BUSINESS

It's always intriguing to see what movies are going to divide the public and the critics – and I don't just mean from each other – Hugh Hudson's *Greystoke* has a healthy supply of both supporters and detractors among people who read this magazine and those who write for it. Here again, I seem to be alone among *Starburst* staffers in liking this attempt to present *Tarzan* as something other than blood-and-thunder adventure. The African

scenes, aided immeasurably by Rick Baker's superb ape costumes, convey brilliantly the early part of the hero's life with some breathtaking photography, marvellous mime, and a powerful symphonic score by John Scott. The English scenes, when *Tarzan* returns to his ancestral home under the benevolent eye of Ralph Richardson (giving a superb penultimate performance) are what cause even some of the film's admirers to temper their enthusiasm. But it seems self-evident to me that these scenes will of necessity be less gripping than the action-filled jungle sequences – and Hudson is successful at conveying the "outsider" in upper-class English society idea (as in his earlier *Chariots of Fire*). And while Christopher Lambert is hardly as muscular a *Tarzan* as Gordon Scott (who, as John Brosnan has opined, is probably the best screen incarnation of Burroughs' Ape Man), his intelligent portrayal fits in with a film more in-

terested in character than action. It must be said, however, that the film's African vistas look severely reduced on a TV screen.

NEW AND FORTHCOMING

At long last: Wes Craven's *Hills Have Eyes 2* is being issued by Thorn EMI Video. Warner's biggie is Steve Martin's *Man With Two Brains*, while Medusa has *The Link*. CIC has an absolute must: the lively *Savage Islands*. VCL is re-issuing the quirky *Phantasm*, and VPD *The Dracula Saga*. From EIV, Samurai supernaturalism with *Sword Kill*.

BRIEF NOTICES

capsule comments by starburst video reviewer barry forshaw
Films that actually try to be Golden Turkeys (*Attack of The Killer Tomatoes*, *Big Meat Easter* etc.) usually fail to attain the delicious self-consciousness of such hilarious junk as *Teenagers From Outer Space*. But *Lost Empire* (Alpha), while too knowing by half, still scores some points with its deliberate ludicrousness – the abbreviated costumes of the big breasted heroines are so over the top (or under the top, to be more accurate) as to indicate that director Jim Wynorski's tongue is firmly in his cheek (not to mention the now-you-see-them-now-you-don't eyebrows of a chief heavy). If you're in an undemanding mood.

Death Collector (VTC) (or *The Collector* as the title reads on the film itself – not to be confused with the film of John Fowles novel) is a tight and effective thriller set in the milieu of petty criminals so well observed by Martin Scorsese (although the director here is Ralph De Vito). Some very sharp acting – a bloody and compulsive piece.

Robert Altman's film of *Popeye* has been re-issued by Walt Disney video – a real curiosity this, of more interest to Altman fans and/or comic fans than the children one might have thought its biggest audience. Robin Williams and Shelley Duvall are impeccable human equivalents of the Fleischer/Segar cartoon, even if Williams is largely incomprehensible.

As well as directing one of the four or five finest supernatural movies ever made (*Night of the Demon*), Jacques Tourneur is most famous for his series of classics made for Val Lewton in the 40's. His last worthwhile film *Comedy of Terrors* (Rank) is a brilliant exercise in macabre humour with the estimable quartet of Price, Lorré, Rathbone and Karloff.



ABOVE: Gotcha! Pluto (Michael Berryman) is subdued by a clean cut African American in Wes Craven's long-awaited *Hills Have Eyes 2* (EMI).

• IT'S ONLY A MOVIE •

A Column by John Brosnan

I was in a state of shock. Physically I was sitting in the front row of the press conference for Ivan Reitman, director and producer of *Ghostbusters*, but mentally I was thousands of miles away. On Bali, to be exact...

Why? Well, because Columbia's delightful PR lady Barbara Dilord (or Praise Dilord as she is known affectionately in Wardour Street) had informed me that Sigourney Weaver would not be attending the press conference at the Inn on the Park. Instead of dropping in on London after her promotion tour of Australia she had decided to go to the island of Bali instead. "Why Bali?" I had demanded, reeling with shock. "She's on her honeymoon," had been the crushing reply.

When the hotel staff had brought me round by waving an open bottle of Canadian Club under my nose my first question was, "She's not on honeymoon with a... a man, is she?" The terrible answer was yes, her new husband was accompanying her on her honeymoon. "Don't tell me she married an Australian?" I gasped. That would have been too much. But no, I learned she'd married a New York theatre director. No doubt he's some pretentious twit who goes running every morning in Central Park wearing Gucci jogging shoes...

So I was helped to my seat as the press conference began. Now Ivan Reitman seems a nice enough bloke but he's no Sigourney Weaver, as I'm sure he'd be the first to admit, so I wasn't really paying him much attention, though I did prick my ears up when he mentioned that he escaped out of Czechoslovakia with his parents when he was only 4 years old. He was nailed under the floorboards of a tugboat after being dragged to keep him quiet. The boat sneaked down a river into Austria where the young Reitman was decanted from under the floorboards and, with his parents, flown to Canada. The drugs, by the way, have since worn off, allowing him to make such movies as *Animal House* (he produced), *Meatballs*, *Heavy Metal* and *Stripes*...

Something else that snapped me out of my Bali-based reverie was mention of one of Reitman's early films, *Cannibal Girls*, made in Canada when he was a stripling of 21 (he's a stripling of 34 now). Now I haven't seen *Cannibal Girls* but I did remember reading a piece about it years ago in the Canadian film magazine *Take One* (sadly, it ceased publication in 1978). I checked up when I got home and, sure enough, in a 1973 issue there's an interview with the young Reitman and his colleague Dan Goldberg (who later pro-



Is this Mr James Fur-man (and his staff) stepping forward to accept John Brosnan's Cinematic Butchery Award? No, it's Mr E. Wok from the Caravan of Courage.

duced *Meatballs* and *Stripes*) about the making of *Cannibal Girls* which was shot in 9 days without a script.

But what really interested me was Reitman's mention, in the interview, of an even earlier movie of his called *The Columbus of Sex* which he and Goldberg produced while they were at university in Ontario. As a result of a screening of the film, based on the memoirs of Frank Harris, at their university, both Reitman and Goldberg were arrested on obscenity charges and later convicted. Fortunately they were only given a one year suspended sentence. Not many people know that.

Back to the press conference: Reitman confirmed that a sequel to *Ghostbusters* was planned but it would only be made if they all agree that the script is good enough. If they can't come up with a satisfactory script then they'll make another type of movie with the *Ghostbusters* team. As far as Reitman is concerned *Ghostbusters Part 2* would have to be better than the *Raiders* sequel which he thinks left many people vaguely disappointed even though they enjoyed it (an opinion I heartily agree with).

It was here I asked my one and only question of the conference. Waving the bunch of red roses I was holding (I had bought them for you-know-who) to attract his attention I asked Reitman if

Sigourney Weaver, she of the appalling taste in husbands, would be in the sequel *Ghostbusters*. "She wants to be, and we want her to be," Reitman told me.

"Praise Dilord!" I cried and threw him a red rose in gratitude.

But cheering though the news was, by the time I wandered outside into the rain - after reluctantly downing several large whiskeys forced on me by the Columbia people - my thoughts had returned to Bali and my depression returned. "How could you, Sigourney, how could you?" I muttered as I trudged up Park Lane, leaving a trail of sodden red roses behind me...

FANTASTIC BOOK

Speaking of Australia (well, it's near Bali) brings me to a book written by fellow Australian Peter Nicholls. It's called *Fantastic Cinema* and is a lavishly illustrated survey of fantasy, horror and science fiction movies. It's also intelligently written, which is not always the case with these sort of books (my own was an exception, of course). I don't agree with all of Mr Nicholls' opinions - eg, he is much too kind to the appalling *Dardoz* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* but fails to fully appreciate *Time After Time* - but as far as I'm concerned disagreeing

with the author is part of the fun of reading film books. Agreeing with the author, particularly when he backs up one of your minority opinions, can also be fun and I was pleased to see that Mr Nicholls backs me on John Carpenter's *The Thing*, calling it 'one of the great milestones in fantastic cinema', a verdict that is sure to irritate a lot of people.

Errors are thin on the page. In fact, though I looked as hard as I could I only found a few minor ones, such as Mr Nicholls' mistaken belief (stated on page 106) that the version of *Blade Runner* released in Britain was less cut than the American version.

Overall it's good value for money at £6.95 for the paperback and (if you're rolling in green stuff) £9.95 for the hardback. It's published by Ebury Press, and available from Forbidden Planet (of course).

THE BROSNO AWARDS

Okay, it's award time again! Hand me the first envelope, please, Dr Sally Gary... Right, the Award for Most Disappointing Feminist Horror Movie goes to *Company of Wolves*... like the make-up, pity about the script...

Next, the Award for Worst George Lucas TV Movie Masquerading as a Feature goes to *Caravan of Courage* (also known as *The Ewok Adventure*, which is the title it was transmitted under by ABC-TV in the States). Please, George, no more Ewoks, okay?

The 1984 Award for Best Remake of 1984 goes to 1984. It was a close race but I think the best movie won, in spite of the severe handicap provided by the Eurythmics' soundtrack...

The Mary Whitehouse Award for Cinematic Butchery (the award is in the shape of a pair of giant bronzed scissors sticking in the back of a film director) goes to, as usual, James Ferman for his remarkable hatchet job on *Exterminator 2*. There's hardly enough left of this dismal little movie to feed through a projector. Where do you go from here, Jim?

Still on censorship, the Award for Sexist Scene I Regret Most Not Seeing in 1984 goes to Kate Capshaw and her nude love scene which was cut from the U.K. version of *Dreamscape*. Nice ones, Kate (or so I hear).

And finally, the Award for Best Genre Movie With a Great Performance by Sigourney Weaver goes to - gosh - *Ghostbusters*! What a surprise!

Hello, what's this? An extra envelope? The Special Award For Movie Nostalgia? Just a sec while I open the thing... Oh, very funny! Whose idea was this - *The Road to Bali*? ■

With the hopeful prospect that BBC2 might screen the second season of *The Invaders* sometime this year, it seems a good idea to present a complete episode guide to series 2. Unlike the first season, in which David Vincent tries single-handedly to convince the authorities of the aliens presence, he is now aided and abetted by a team of believers. The main reason for this change of format was tv audiences lost interest by the continual predictability of earlier stories. However, although this does introduce some interesting plot devices, the series still failed to capture viewers attention and *The Invaders* was cancelled after 26 episodes.

The Invaders Series One. 17 episodes. Regular cast, Roy Thinnes as David Vincent.

The Invaders Series Two. 26 episodes. Regular cast Roy Thinnes and Kent Smith as Edgar Scoville. Executive Producer: Quinn Martin. Producer: Alan Armer. Creator: Larry Cohen. Music: Dominic Frontiere. 60 minutes Colour. 1967/8.

Condition Red, written by Laurence Heath. Director: Don Medford. Guest Stars: Antoinette Bower, Jason Evers. The North American Air Defence Command falls victim to an alien invasion. Only Vincent's quick thinking diverts a catastrophe.

The Saucer, written by Dan B. Ullman. Director: Jess Hibbs. Guest stars: Anne Francis, Charles Drake. With the help of a so-called 'crank', Vincent tracks down an alien spaceship and captures it.

The Watchers, written by Jerry Sohl and Earl Hamner Jr. Director: Jesse Hibbs. Guest stars: Shirley Knight, Kevin McCarthy. An alien attempt to take over the running of a hotel is thwarted by Vincent and an unlikely ally.

Valley of the Shadow, written by Howard Merrill and Robert Sabaroff. Director: Jesse Hibbs. Guest Stars: Ron Hayes, Nan Townes. An entire town become aware of the invaders when one is captured by the local police.

The Enemy, written by John W. Bloch. Director: Robert Butler. Guest stars: Barbara Barrie, Richard Anderson. A nurse rescues an alien from a crashed saucer but he begins to revert to his true form. Vincent races against time to save her.

The Trial, written by George Eckstein and David W. Rintels. Director: Robert Butler. Guest stars: Don Gordon, Lynnda Day. A man kills an alien and is put on trial but there are further complications involving the alien's wife.

The Spores, written by George Eckstein, David W. Rintels, Ellis Kadison and Joel Kane. Director: William Hale. Guest stars: Gene Hackman, John Randolph. Fully grown extra-terrestrials from seeds sends David Vincent on a frantic search for help.

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss



Roy Thinnes as "architect" (as though it mattered what he did for a living!) David Vincent, the man who witnessed the landing of a spaceship carrying creatures from another world in *The Invaders* ("A Quinn Martin production").

The aliens hope to infiltrate a summit meeting dealing with increases in the Earth's radioactivity. Vincent receives warning that World Leaders are in danger.

Summit Meeting (Part Two). An ex-Dark Outpost, written by Jerry Sohl and George McCowan. Director: George McCowan. Guest stars: William Sargent, Tim McIntire. Discovering that the alien's could be susceptible to certain Earth diseases, Vincent boards one of their spacecraft in order to locate the whereabouts of their treatment centre.

Summit Meeting (Part One), written by George Eckstein. Director: Don Medford. Guest stars: William Windom, Diana Hyland, Michael Rennie.

The aliens hope created to reduce levels of radioactivity becomes a time bomb of destruction in alien hands.

The Prophet, written by Warren Duff. Director: Robert Douglas. Guest stars: Pat Hingle Zine Bethume. A religious fanatic prepares his followers for the invasion from the skies.

Labyrinth, written by Art Wallace. Director: Murray Golden. Guest stars: Ed Begley, Sally Kellerman. Vincent obtains vital evidence in his fight against the aliens.

The Captive, written by Laurence Heath. Director: William Hale. Guest stars: Dana Wynter, Fritz Weaver. An alien has the opportunity to provoke East and West into a third world war unless stopped by David Vincent.

The Believers, written by Barry Oringer. Director: Paul Wendkos. Guest stars: Carol Lynley, Than Wyenn, Kent Smith. Edgar Scoville appears for the first time to help Vincent in his battle with the aliens. Now there is a team of believers willing to devote their energies to destroying them.

The Ransom, written by Robert Collins. Director: Lewis Allen. Guest stars: Alfred Ryder, Anthony Eisley. Capturing an alien at a regeneration centre, Vincent and his believers discover the very safety of the Earth is now in jeopardy.

Task Force, written by Warren Duff. Director: William Hale. Guest stars: Lindon Chiles, Nancy Kovak. The alien's attempt to take over a huge publishing firm in their bid for the nation's news media.

The Possessed, written by John W. Bloch. Director: William Hale. Guest stars: Michael Tolar, Michael Constantine. An old friend of Vincent's warns him about mysterious events at a private sanitarium.

Counterattack, written by Laurence Heath. Director: Robert Douglas. Guest stars: Anna Capri, Lin McCarthy. Vincent and his followers devise a plan to jam the homing signals sent into space by the aliens for guiding their saucers to Earth.

The Pit, written by Jack Milner. Director: Louis Allen. Guest stars: Charles Aidman, Joanne Linville. A professor who claims to have extensive knowledge of an invasion is declared insane by the authorities.

The Organisation, written by Franklin Barton. Director: William Hale. Guest stars: J. D. Canon, Chris Robinson. A crime syndicate joins forces with Vincent when their shipment of drugs is stolen by the aliens.

The Peacemaker, written by David W. Rintels. Director: Robert Day. Guest stars: James Daly, Phyllis Thaxter. A peace meeting with the aliens is threatened.

The Vise, written by Robert Sabaroff and William Blinn. Director: William Hale. Guest stars: Raymond St. Jacques, Roscoe Lee Brown. Racial tension with a black alien.

The Miracle, written by Robert Collins. Director: Robert Day. Guest stars: Barbara Hershey. A girl believes that an alien who incinerates before her eyes is a miracle.

The Lifeseekers, written by Laurence Heath. Director: Paul Wendkos. Guest stars: Barry Morse, Diana Muldaur. Two aliens enlist Vincent's help to stop the invasion.

The Persuaded, written by Don Brinkly. Director: William Hale. Guest stars: Suzanne Pleshette. An alien woman is given synthetic emotions that she finds difficult to control.

Inquisition, written by Barry Oringer. Director: Robert Glazer. Guest stars: Mark Richman, Susan Oliver. Murder is pinned on Vincent when a senator dies in an explosion.

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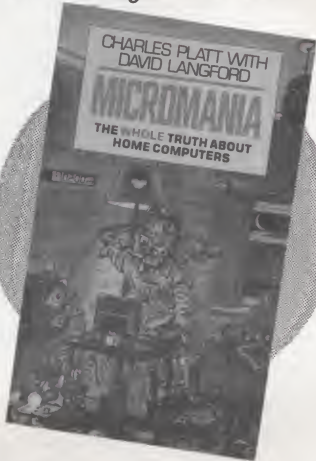
Are you a computer freak who enjoys tinkering around with word processors and video games? I have to admit that I've never been bitten by the bug and remain steadfastly illiterate in matters electronic. Computers are still a big mystery to me, and I wouldn't know my RAM from my COBOL. Despite this, I can heartily recommend a new book on home computers – *Micromania* by Charles Platt with David Langford (Sphere, £1.75). This is a very entertaining consumers' guide to the home computer market which is doubly effective because it's written in plain though lively English so that idiots like myself can understand it.

Platt is a self-confessed computer addict, but he takes a very sceptical and ironic attitude towards the often grandiose claims which computer manufacturers make for their products. He also reveals just how expensive and time-consuming an addiction to such gadgets can be. Ably assisted by David Langford (who adapted the text for a British market), Platt delivers a scathing report on the state of the art, clarifying the jargon which bedevils the field and taking manufacturers to task on a variety of issues, not least the incompatibility of their systems. The book is lucid and highly readable throughout, containing the clearest explanation of how computers work that I've ever come across; it should be a must for anyone with the slightest interest in the subject.

Golden-Fire by Stephen Donaldson (Fontana, £1.25) is a previously unpublished episode from the author's long and very successful "Chronicles of Thomas Covenant". The book seemed very pricey to me, given that it contains less than a hundred pages of rather large text; but no doubt it will be snapped up by fans of the series. In his foreword Donaldson describes the tale as an "out-take" from the *Ilsearth War* and says that "it cannot stand on its own as an independent story". In other words, unless you've read the other books, this one isn't going to make much sense. What we have here is something which isn't even a short story, padded out to book length; which seems to me to be a blatant piece of profiteering on the part of Donaldson's publishers.

• BOOK • WORLD

Reviews by Chris Charles



The Zen Gun by Barrington J. Bayley (Methuen, £1.95) is much better value, being packed with ideas. Bayley is a highly inventive and rather neglected writer who is one of SF's true originals. *The Zen Gun* is stylized space opera featuring galactic empires, ultimate weapons, rifts in the fabric of space-time, and much else in a mind-boggling vein. The emphasis is on pace and intellectual stimulus, the author moving the story along at a fairly hectic pace. Compared with the plodding, self-conscious nature of much science fiction these days, this novel is positively carefree and brimming with invention; if anything, it would have been better if it had been a little longer.

Jonathan Carroll is another relatively unknown writer whose first novel, *The Land of Laughs*, I praised back in *Starburst* 50. This is now reprinted by Arrow at £1.95, along with his new novel, *Voice of Our*

Shadow (£1.75). *The Land of Laughs* remains one of the most original and haunting books of recent years, and while *Voice of Our Shadow* is by no means as striking or successful, it does reveal Carroll as a very good writer with a healthy future ahead of him. In this book, a young American in Vienna has an affair with the wife of a couple he's befriended. Gradually an air of menace creeps into the story as the husband dies but begins reappearing to them as a ghost. All this is given an added frisson by the fact that the young man has a guilty secret—he caused the death of his own brother many years before. Carroll ties the two threads of his tale together in a climax which has great dramatic impact; unfortunately, on reflection, the twist-ending seems somewhat contrived and improbable in the context of the novel as a whole. Nevertheless the book is well worth reading, Carroll

being a gifted writer who speaks with a distinctive voice.

A trio of books from Gollancz this month, including J.G. Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* (£8.95) which is not actually fantasy or science fiction but is noteworthy because it's the novel that everyone seems to feel should have won this year's Booker Prize. This is a fictionalized version of the author's own childhood experiences as a prisoner-of-war in Shanghai, presented in Ballard's inimitable manner. From Ian Watson comes *The Book of the Stars* (£8.95), the second volume in a trilogy begun with *The Book of the River*. Watson can be a complex, demanding writer, but in these books he appears to have opted for a story which is strong on narrative and incident as opposed to his usual penchant for philosophical or intellectual conundrums. *Best SF of the Year 13* is Gollancz's annual compilation of short stories, edited by Terry Carr. It features material from Robert Silverberg, Fredrik Phol, Richard Cowper, John Sladek and others. Available in hardback at £9.95, there's also a trade paperback edition at £4.95. This is a good idea in theory, though it's probably priced too high to attract the typical paperback customer. *The Guide to Fantasy Art* (Paper Tiger, £6.95) is an illustrated book featuring well-known fantasy artists who talk about their work and the influences which shaped them, the idea being to provide beginners with practical information on how to develop their artistic talents. I should declare a vested interest here – I wrote the text. Eight artists are featured, including Jim Burns, Chris Foss, Patrick Woodroffe and the model-maker Martin Bower, who has designed spacecraft and sets for TV shows such as *Doctor Who*, *Blake's Seven* and *Tripods*, and films such as *Alien*, *Outland* and *Flash Gordon*. Bower explains how he creates space stations, battle cruisers and all manner of futuristic hardware from a variety of materials including crab claws, yogurt pots, plastic construction kits, and anything else that happens to look suitably technological. Everyone should rush out and buy this book – it's amazing what you can do with a soldering iron and the innards of an old vacuum cleaner. ■

• DATA BANK •

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary

Greetings, seekers of knowledge. You've reached that point in Starburst where gems of fantasy film trivia are drawn from the mystic filing cabinet and laid bare for your entertainment and information. And if that isn't the most unusual introduction to a *Data Bank* yet, I'll eat my stethoscope. But in case you're thinking I've forgotten why I'm here, I'll get on with it...

SPACE PATROL

"Am I imagining things, or was there once a puppet-series on tv in the early Sixties called *Space Patrol*?" writes Andy Daniels of Leeds. "No one else seems to remember it, so I have turned to you as a last resort."

A last resort, eh? Ah well. So no one else (in Leeds? In the world?) remembers *Space Patrol*? How quickly they forget. Yes, Andy. There was a space-based puppet series of the early Sixties called *Space Patrol*. If memory serves (and this is all on memory!) it was introduced on the commercial channel to take over after the Gerry Anderson show *Fireball XL-5* finished. The two shows had quite a bit in common, except that where *Fireball* ranged the galaxy, the spaceship in *Space Patrol*, Galasphere 357, was confined for the most part to our own solar system. The show was produced for National Interest Pictures by Roberta Leigh and Arthur Provis and sported a "musical"

soundtrack that reminded me of the electronic bleeps and burbles of *Forbidden Planet*. All the shows were written by Roberta Leigh. The voices were provided by Libby Morris, Dick Vosburgh, Ronnie Stevens and Murray Cash (where are they now?) Puppetry by Martin and Heather Granger and John Garrick. "Space Consultant" was Colin Ronan. Photographed by Arthur Provis. Models by Derek Freeborn. And the special effects were by Bill Palmer, Brian Stevens and Bert Walker. The series centred on the adventures of Captain Larry Dart, commander of the good ship Galasphere 357, and his fellow crew members Husky the Martian (who spent most of his time complaining that he was hungry, and generally acting macho) and Slim the Venusian (a delicate feminine fellow who always struck me as a kind of stereotype gay character). The Earthbound end of the cast was headed by Colonel Raeburn (corny, huh?) and Professor "Don't call me Pop" Hagerty. Marla was his daughter who always — you guessed it — called him Pop.

It was a cheery little show, with many comedy elements (like the gabbler dictum bird, a kind of space going parrot) though seen today looks a little primitive. The only other thing I can remember about it was that the crew used to explore alien planets on anti-grav scooters that were almost identical to those used in Gerry Anderson's *Fireball XL-5*.



The Monster from *Night of the Demon* (aka *Curse of the Demon*, 1957).

DAWN OF THE DEMON?

"I recently saw *Night of the Demon* starring Dana Andrews and Peggy Cummings and featuring an inspired performance by Foggy Dewhurst. My brother, impressed by the basic ideas, has begun to plan a remake. What I would like to know is has a remake already been done, under any title or any number of plot changes." Ruth Montgomery, Portsmouth.

No.

FUEST THINGS FIRST

Paul Richmond dropped me a line from Croydon to ask about British director Robert Fuest. Seems that Paul recently saw the Fuest offering *The Final Programme* on the box and wants to know more about this eccentric and uneven film-maker. Paul also mentions that Starburst has been singularly lax in its coverage of Fuest's work and suggests that we rectify that situation immediately, if not sooner (ah,

the old gags are the best!)

All I've got on Fuest's film credits are: *The Abominable Dr Phibes* (1971), *Dr Phibes Rises Again* (1973), *The Final Programme* (1974), *The Devil's Rain* (1975). Fuest also worked as a set designer during the early days of the tv *Avengers* series.

FRYE GUY

Tim Preston of Minehead, Somerset has come up with another of those questions that I love to get but have a hell of a time answering. He wants to know about a film he remembers seeing a couple of years back in which Dwight Frye played a demented sidekick. Terrific, Tim. What film *didn't* Dwight Frye play a demented sidekick in? But wait, all is not lost. Tim's remembered something else. The movie had a dead man coming back to haunt his murderer. Ah ha! Tim also wants to know Frye's fantasy movie credits and what happened to him after the mid-Forties.

Okay, the movie you're spending sleepless nights trying to remember sounds like *Dead Men Walk*, starring



Jerry Cornelius (Jon Finch) and Professor Hara (Hugh Griffith) contemplate the end of the world in *The Final Programme* (1974).



George Zucco. Made in 1943 it's a real yawn and is only notable for being Frye's last picture – he died that year, at the age of 44. Frye's fantasy credits go like this: *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), *Strange Adventure* (1932), *The Vampire Bat* (1933), *The Invisible Man* (1933), *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), *The Crime of Dr Crespi* (1935), *The Cat and the Canary* (1939), *Drums of Fu Manchu* (1940), *Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942), *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman*



Top: Vincent Price as *The Abominable Dr Phibes* (1971). Above: Dwight Frye as *Ranfield* cowers before Bela Lugosi as *Dracula*, with Helen Chandler as *Mina Seward*, in this 1931 publicity shot.

(1943), *Dead Men Walk* (1943). That's it, we're out of room. See you next month. In the meantime...

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fantasy related
trivia questions to:
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DOCTOR WHO

